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PERCEPTIONS OF STATE-FUNDED, SCHOOL DISTRICT-BASED PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA 2004-2006

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PERCEPTIONS OF STATE-FUNDED, SCHOOL DISTRICT-BASED PRINCIPAL
PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA 2004-2006

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Dedication

I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who supported me through every step of this lengthy path. A special expression of appreciation goes to my long-time friend, Tina Andes, who is the true example of friendship and a mother of three wonderful sons whom I have tried to emulate with fidelity to my three sons. This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of her son, Seth Andes.

In addition to my three precious sons, Campbell, Tyler, and Hunter, we are now blessed with Tyler's wife, Karen, and their beautiful son, Graham, who arrived in March 2009, and will soon have a baby brother. I am so proud of my three boys who serve our great country in the United States Marine Corps. Thank God all three are safely home from deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti. My sons provided daily examples of courage and unwavering dedication while overcoming unspeakable challenges. As they faced harrowing physical danger and intolerable conditions without complaint, I told myself that I could certainly complete one dissertation. My sons have grown into solid, grounded men who are true leaders. May they have continued blessings and fulfillment along their journeys. This dissertation is dedicated to each of you.

Fleet Watson Kirk has been a huge part of my life for many years as my husband and father extraordinaire to our sons. Fleet models rock-steady faith, values, and adherence to his beliefs. His service and dedication to his family is shown in countless ways. Fleet overcame challenges with tenacity and endurance and he has always been there for me. Thank you.

As life brings joy, there have been some earthly losses for our family. Our belief in everlasting life brings comfort as we remember Hugh McLane Gordy, Dee Dee Kirk, Bruce Kirk, Katherine Anna Kirk, and our beloved Chesapeake Retriever, Dreamchaser (Chase). My cherished grandparents are in my heart always: Mimi and Bobo (Hazel and William Bowlin); Grandma-Mommy (Ethel Hearn Gordy). DanDan (William S. Kirk) and Grandma Vicky are special grandparents in our family. For your influence on my life, I dedicate my research.

Sisters are priceless and I am thankful that my extraordinary sister is also my best friend. Laura McLane Gordy Davison is my earthly angel. Laura, Scott, Hugh, Christie, and Carrie are stellar examples of business and academic successes along with athletic dedication. My love and eternal thanks go to my parents who redirected by stubborn personality and raised their daughters to have honor and character. This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Hugh McLane Gordy and Marilyn Anne Bowlin Gordy.

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Abstract

PERCEPTIONS OF STATE FUNDED, SCHOOL DISTRICT-BASED PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS FROM 2004-2006 IN VIRGINIA

Kathryn Gordy Kirk, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010

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The mixed methods case study described and analyzed the 2004-2006 district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia. This dissertation explored goals stated in proposals for funding as well as program director and program completer perceptions of goals, content, processes, and outcomes for the 10 principal preparation programs that stemmed from the Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership.

Data collection employed three phases: Phase I focused on the 10 grant proposals; Phase II involved semistructured interview questions centered on perceptions of nine participating program directors; Phase III investigated perceptions of 75 program completers who responded to a web-based survey. Data collection was conducted by coding proposals, transcriptions of directors' interviews, and open-ended survey responses were coded to explore key terms that would be used to identify themes within and across all data sets. Findings from qualitative data

analyses revealed themes related to program goals, content, processes (i.e., program delivery, elements), and outcomes.

Program directors' and program completers' perceptions of the identified themes (e.g., practitioner-oriented, real life) were found to both differ and have similarities. Instructional content received minimal discussion from most program directors; program completers generally perceived needs for more content instruction in school law, special education, and finance. Practitioner-oriented program processes were perceived as valuable by both groups. Mentorship, portfolio projects, and SLLA test preparation were perceived as critical. Diverse perceptions were found particularly in the personal interactive component of the eight elements.

Program directors and completers shared the same outcome goal; both groups were focused on fully prepared, highly qualified principals. Both groups wanted a definition of standards for acceptance into district-based principal preparation programs.

Outcomes of the 10 programs included unintended consequences as well as challenges, particularly the ongoing need to balance theory and practice to reform principal preparation programs. Three of the 10 programs have continued with redefined partnership roles. Universities provide the preparation and involved school divisions annually select their cohort of students and provide some funding.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

For some time the current delivery systems for the preparation of prospective school principals have had neither an adequate supply of aspiring administrators nor ones who are prepared to succeed in the increasingly complex schools of the 21st century (Murphy, Moorman, & McCarthy, 2007). Current and anticipated shortages of fully prepared principals created the need for change in traditional preparation programs. In addition to redesigned university programs, researchers have urged institutions of higher education and states to consider alternatives to university programs (Southern Regional Education Board, 2006). Well aware of the need for strong leadership in each of their schools, school divisions became increasingly involved with aspects of preparing emerging educational leaders (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, diverse partnerships between school divisions and universities began forming to collaborate in preparing future principals. The professional literature and research have been building on the effectiveness of these varied partnerships as well as expanding on the identification of features within collaborative programs that better prepare principals to support teachers and raise pupil achievement (Adams & Copeland, 2005; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Orr, 2007).

In 2000, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) concluded that the reason schools have far-reaching problems stems from the scarcity of capable, well prepared educational

leaders. Without strong leadership, schools have diminished possibilities of meeting everyday challenges in the constantly changing educational and community arena. A 2005 report from the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI) (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Myerson, 2005) indicated that too many graduates would be certified (i.e., endorsed as a principal in their state) but not prepared to effectively lead necessary school-wide changes. Research has found that strong school leadership influences pupil achievement; learning and strong leadership have a positive correlation.

A continued interest with enhancement of principal leadership fuels my quest for variables that contribute to the preparation of highly qualified leaders in education who can support teachers in successfully raising pupil achievement. A frequent topic of discussion, in theoretical and practical courses in educational leadership, is how to prepare highly qualified principals to use strong leadership in developing thriving school cultures. In a Virginia Policy Brief, the principal was described as the, “single most important person in a school,” and the person designated to, “set the tone and expectations for learning” (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2004, p. 17). It is important that principals have appropriate training and preparation for the significant tasks that they will encounter.

A study by Davis et al. (2005) stated, “While there is little empirical evidence on how specific program components influence leadership behavior, performance on the job, or student outcomes, there is some promising research seeking to understand the outcomes of preparation programs” (p. 12). Clearly, there is a need for studies that investigate which elements of principal preparation programs yield the most gains.

Statement of the Problem

Over the last three decades, an increasing shortage of available candidates for principal positions has been noted (Levine, 2005). This longitudinal study found a 40% turnover of principals between 1985 and 2005. The study concluded that 250,000 principals in the United States have been prepared for tasks and roles that no longer exist in the principalship. Aspects of the principalship were found to contribute to shortages of highly qualified candidates (Hess & Kelly, 2005a). These aspects include long hours, high stress, accountability issues, and minimal pay above teacher salaries.

Since 2000 the shortage has crystallized to a shortage of fully qualified candidates for a dramatically different school landscape. The problem this study addresses is the need for effective reform in principal preparation programs which result in educational leaders who are fully prepared to lead schools in the 21st century.

In the last 20 years of the 20th century, reports such as *Leaders for America's Schools* (National Commission for Excellence in Educational Administration, 1988) promoted reform in principal preparation programs. This report was a springboard for changes in educational leadership, but new designs for principal preparation were few. The process of change was a challenge dominating the field. Murphy (2001) expressed fault in program content, fragmented program plans, lack of practical knowledge, and the admission requirements in university programs that rely on self-selection. He particularly stressed the need for updated curriculum and program models to fully prepare new school leaders along with the need for cogent performance standards and licensure requirements. The field of educational leadership then moved into a period of multiple and competing new program designs for principal preparation in the late

1990's and early 2000's. A consensus was needed for program design along with specific, practical reform in the balance of theory and practice.

In a critical research report from Columbia University, Levine (2005) examined educational leadership programs across the nation, describing them as “deeply troubled” and “offering programs that fail to prepare school leaders for their jobs” (p. 63). In a recorded interview (Virginia Department of Education, 2006), Levine stated that traditional university-based programs were “disconnected from practice” with an “imbalance between clinical and academic instruction.” He also indicated that insufficient graduation requirements along with a weak student body need a different set of requirements and skills to achieve successful outcomes for pupils in public schools. From Levine’s perspective, principals must facilitate pupil preparation for a “different world” and the current curriculum does not match these needs.

Due to dissatisfaction with lack of change in principal preparation programs and the need for reform to fully prepare school leaders who can effectively lead schools, Virginia initiated and supported program changes. The 2002 Session of the General Assembly formed the Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership. With the goal of submitting findings and recommendations to the 2004 Session of the General Assembly, this 2-year commission, comprised of 21 members, met five times in 2002 to hear testimony from school administrators, education experts, and representatives of state and national education organizations. The Wallace Foundation provided instrumental support of the commission by awarding one of only 15 national State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) grants sought by the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia Department of Education. This 3-year grant was implemented with the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) at Virginia

Commonwealth University in January 2002 with annual funds of \$250,000 (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, House Document 16, 2005).

The Commission recommended continuation of its work in 2004 regarding alternative licensure routes and regular review of the “critical issues surrounding educational leadership, including, but not limited to, training, induction, licensure, and fiscal resources” (Executive summary page of HJR 124 Final Report, 2005). The final report of the Commission recommended the establishment of “local and regional leadership academies” and appropriated \$500,000 annually between 2004-2006 for competitive grants of \$100,000 each to be awarded to school divisions that “demonstrate a partnership agreement with a Virginia institution of higher learning and/or other entity for a defined leadership development program that addresses the leadership standards established for such training as defined by the Board of Education.” The Virginia Department of Education would establish the guidelines and oversee the grant-funded partnership programs.

The General Assembly responded by appropriating one million dollars for school divisions to develop partnerships with a Virginia university or other entity that were based upon the Virginia Board of Education Standards and the ISLLC Standards (DeMary, 2004). With the support of the appropriation, the General Assembly was acknowledging a sense of dissatisfaction with the lack of reform in traditional principal preparation programs and the need for fully prepared emerging principals to fill anticipated vacancies. The General Assembly had an underlying motive to stimulate reform by using competition to put pressure on universities to transform their programs to reach the goal of producing enough fully prepared principals for 21st century schools. Historically, universities had a monopoly on principal preparation, thus school division personnel were dependent upon universities. The opinion the commission conveyed to

the General Assembly was that the status quo in which universities were stuck called for competition (i.e., school district-based preparation programs) to shatter the complacency of faculty members in traditional university programs. The development of new partnerships for delivering principal preparation, funded by the General Assembly, provided an opportunity for innovation in principal preparation strongly recommended by leaders for more than 20 years. Grant proposals were submitted and five grants of \$100,000 were awarded in October 2004 for the first two-year funding cycle with an additional five \$100,000 grants awarded for the second two-year funding cycle. Grant-funded programs operated with \$50,000 each year. The grant-funded programs were comprised of 1 to 12 school divisions in diverse partnerships with one to three university partners. One program proposal took the option of partnering with a nonuniversity entity (i.e., group of retired professional educators) along with a university whose role was summative program evaluation only.

The School Leadership Development grants were intended for school divisions to create and implement reform in partnerships with higher education or other entity. It was the hope of the Commission that competition would stimulate reform in traditional university principal preparation programs (VDOE DVD, Wallace Conversations). In the past, higher education had the market on preparing principals that was described as a monopoly. Partnerships could provide a balance of practice and theory in order to meet specific needs of school divisions. Principal preparation has been described as a “beginning of a journey but not the entire journey alone” (DeMary, 2009). Principal preparation has been envisioned in Virginia as the beginning of a continuous career development pathway. Beyond the grant guidelines to partner with higher education and/or other entity, the door was open for creative, valuable programs and for school

divisions to determine their specific needs. The grant-funded programs had no other criteria and were not formally evaluated.

Shortages in fully prepared, highly qualified school leaders might be partially abated if school divisions participate in planning, selection, and preparation of emerging leaders. Because pupil achievement is positively correlated with effective school leadership by research (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), schools sharing ownership for the selection and preparation of emerging leaders would benefit from learning about perceptions of advantageous program elements (e.g., mentorship, portfolio).

Leaders in the 21st century face different issues and challenges than in the past. Hess and Kelly (2005a) described educational leaders as facing “unprecedented challenges,” while still retaining the traditional system of recruitment, preparation, and induction that has yet to adequately prepare educational leaders. Emerging principals need preparation that results in them meeting the demands of the diverse and challenging roles they face in the future.

Rationale for Study of the Problem

A study on goals, outcomes and perceptions of grant-funded, district-based principal preparation programs is important for school divisions, universities, future principals, and pupil achievement. The study of perceptions and components of these programs is practical because research is nearly nonexistent (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Myerson, & Orr, 2007; Murphy et al., 2007). Since the leadership of the principal is crucial to pupil learning and achievement, it is of vital importance that they be fully prepared as highly qualified candidates who will use strong leadership in schools. The reason for this study is to expand awareness of content, beneficial elements used in principal preparation programs, as well as program goals and outcomes.

It is anticipated that this study will contribute to the larger body of literature about the diverse elements used in principal preparation programs. Perceptions of grant-funded, district-based program directors and completers could lead to the addition or modification of beneficial elements in future programs. Knowing what elements are considered worthwhile could lead to an increase of fully prepared principals capable of handling the critical tasks in today's schools. If principal preparation resulted in highly qualified professionals the principalship would likely become more attractive and conceivably contribute to mitigating the shortage with fully prepared new principals.

It is also important to consider the impact the 10 grant-funded, district-based principal preparation programs may have had in Virginia. What were their intended goals and what were the outcomes? Are they still operating? What was considered valuable by the program directors and program completers? What impact did the 10 programs have on higher education in Virginia? These questions are addressed in this study.

The findings may provide direct benefit to school divisions in need of strong leaders as well as be indispensable to individuals in becoming influential school leaders. Enhancement of school divisions' preparation of emerging leaders should benefit K-12 pupils, teachers, future leaders, and the community.

Purpose for Study

The purpose of this study is to examine productive elements used in principal preparation programs. Mining the perceptions of program designers/implementers and program completers planning to become principals will draw on experiences that provide constructive input for those preparing principals in the future. Perceptions about the value of several different elements

employed by these programs will be tapped and solely focus on district-based preparation programs in Virginia public schools.

Professional Literature

The topic of effective principal preparation has been debated for almost 100 years. The history of educational leadership describes several attempts at overall reform of principal preparation programs since their inception. The required coursework and training continues to appear much the same since programs began (Berry & Breach, 2006; Levine, 2005; Murphy et al., 2007). Seymour Sarason (1971) repeated a French quote by Alphonse Karr (1809) that applies to educational leadership, “the more things change, the more they remain the same” (p. 46). With the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards utilized in 46 states (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996), the first decade of the 21st century has resulted in increasing partnerships between universities and school divisions when preparing principals.

Literature on the principalship is replete with studies of principal shortages and need for fully prepared, highly qualified principals who use strong leadership (Hess & Kelly, 2005a; Levine, 2005; Murphy et al., 2007). According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), as of 2003 the national retirement rate of principals remained at 45% to 66% annually, and was expected to remain so through 2010 (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003). Shortages of qualified applicants for principal positions were noted by a national survey of superintendents; 60% of superintendents stated they take, “whatever they can get” (Hess, 2003, p. 1). The number of positions in educational administration was expected to grow as much as 25% between 2003 and 2008 (Mitgang, 2003).

Research indicates that fewer teachers appear to want the growing challenges of the principalship (Cusick, 2003). In California, 90% of school districts reported shortages of secondary school principals and 73% reported shortages of elementary school principals. The literature reports similar shortages nationally (Davis et al., 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2005a; Levine, 2005). Many teachers have endorsements as a principal but choose to remain in the classrooms. Mitgang (2003) indicated that teachers do not want the high pressure, long work hours, and increased responsibilities when the pay-off is an average salary increase of only \$16.00 per day for secondary principals and \$5.00 per day for elementary principals. The challenges of the principalship are not perceived as being worth the salary, additional work hours, stress, and responsibilities (Hess & Kelly, 2005a; Mitgang, 2003).

Schools have serious problems and the “scarcity of capable educational leaders ranks among the most severe of the problems” according to the Center for Reinventing the Principalship (Mitgang, 2003, p. 2). In the *American School Board Journal*, Paul D. Houston stated, “there are really just four problems with the current leadership system: the job is impossible, the expectations are inappropriate, the training is inadequate, and the pipeline is inverted” (Houston, 2002, p. 4).

Well known proponents for reform in educational administration (Murphy et al., 2007) portray 25 years of investment by researchers as trying to understand the “school improvement algorithm”; and, they concur that leadership is the critical component in school improvement. These authors reported that evidence from effective school studies confirms leadership as the, “explanatory variable in schools where all students meet ambitious achievement targets” (Murphy et al., 2007, p. 9). Principals have been described as the most important person in the

school because of their impact on the learning environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Principals are in the “hot seat” to improve teaching and learning (Davis et al., 2005, p. 100) and schools must be staffed with highly qualified principals who can improve pupil achievement by supporting their faculty in this process. The presence of highly qualified principals using strong leadership has an impact on everyone in the school community including the pupils, parents, faculty and staff, and other members of the school division (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). The main purpose of education is to produce contributing members of society whose highest potential has been tapped. Because pupil achievement is directly linked with strong school leadership it behooves schools to employ fully qualified principals using strong leadership.

Knowing that principals affect pupil achievement clarifies the significance of the association between accountability standards that require academic gains be achieved and receiving accreditation (Bottoms, O’Neill, Fry, & Hill, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Leithwood, et al., 2004; U. S. Department of Education, 2004). The No Child Left Behind Act (U. S. Department of Education, 2001), societal changes with emphasis on high-stakes testing, and principal retirement shortages contribute to the urgent need for fully prepared, highly qualified principals who employ strong leadership. Research is expected to increase the potential for better prepared principals who maximize pupil achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 2007; Orr, 2007).

Traditionally principals have been prepared by universities through a prescribed series of courses and an internship. It is crucial to have knowledge about elements of principal preparation programs so future principals are ready to lead when assuming the position of principal. It is

clear that there is scant literature on the topic of effective elements of principal preparation programs. Hess and Kelly (2005b) found that virtually no study tracked changes in leadership preparation to success as a school leader. This view was also held by McCarthy (2003) who referenced the lack of data linking reforms in administrator preparation to the purpose of producing capable leaders.

Preparing new principals is a focus of school divisions and communities who benefit from strong schools. According to a *Richmond Times-Dispatch* press release dated May 8, 2009, the U.S. Department of Education awarded 5.2 million dollars to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to work collaboratively with a local school division to prepare up to 30 new principals. Richmond City public schools faced a critical need for strong leadership and proactively began working on a succession plan for a number of principal positions resulting from retirements and job changes.

Since 2000 partnerships between universities and school divisions have developed in order to meet the needs for fully prepared emerging principals. Some school divisions have actively participated in preparing emerging principals. In Virginia the Department of Education (VDOE) has provided support for training new principals.

Research Questions

This study explores the effectiveness of school district-based principal preparation programs as perceived by the program directors and program participants who completed the programs. The major research questions follow:

1. What did the implementers of the state-funded district-based principal preparation programs plan to accomplish?

2. What were the outcomes of the state-funded district-based principal preparation programs?

3. How were the elements used in principal preparation programs perceived by program directors and program completers?

Methods

This dissertation was a mixed-methods study utilizing a case study approach with artifact analysis, qualitative data for the study of interviews with program directors and open-ended questions on the survey of program completers, and quantitative data from the survey of program completers' perceptions analyzed with descriptive statistics. The case study included each of the 10 state-funded, district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. The 10 programs in this study represented a geographical range across Virginia as well as inclusion of programs from urban, suburban, and rural areas. These programs were designed for the preparation of future school leaders and delivered to aspiring principals. Nine of these ten district-based programs formed partnerships with local universities to prepare future leaders; all ten programs were aligned with ISLLC (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) standards. The program unassociated with a university worked with another entity.

In-depth interviews were held with each of the 10 program directors. These interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then studied for themes, trends, methods, and program elements. Each program director was asked for email addresses of program completers from the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years.

Each interview with a program director included a request for artifacts related to each school-based principal preparation program. The artifacts included in this study were the grant proposals provided by the Director of Professional Practice. Other potential documents (e.g.,

plans/goals, procedures for admission, curriculum, instructional methods, syllabi) were requested; due to lack of consistency and sparse number of documents submitted, it was not possible to use these additional artifacts for study. The grant proposals were examined to add depth to the study of perceptions held by program directors and program completers. Also crucial to a deeper analysis of the programs is delving into intended goals and perceptions of outcomes and strengths of each program.

A web-based survey was developed to investigate program completers' perceptions about elements used and other aspects of their preparation program. The population of available program completers was sampled and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the surveys.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to explore features/elements used in district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia. This review begins with agreement of professionals that the impact of leadership on pupil learning is direct (Leithwood et al., 2004). History of principal preparation, current status of leadership, description of preparation programs, features/elements used, program standards, need for studying preparation gives structure to the remainder of the chapter that ends with Definition of Terms. Other than the historical context, the majority of the literature was published since 2000 when partnerships between schools and universities were forming to prepare emerging leaders.

Educational Leadership Affects Learning

Long assumed and more recently established in the field, we know instructional leadership has a positive association with pupil achievement (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; Murphy et al., 2007). As school leadership has received enhanced recognition, the role of school principal has also received increased scrutiny. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) stated that, “Every educational reform report of the last decade concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders” (cited in Orr, 2007, p. 3).

While the field of educational leadership focuses on the importance of the principal on pupil achievement, more attention is directed to the quality of leaders, and considerable

interest is focused on the preparation of school leaders (Murphy et al., 2007). As stated in an Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) report in 2001, “Learning doesn’t happen without leadership. The demands have changed, the profession has not and the tension is beginning to show” (p. 9). Leithwood et al. (2004) saw the problems in school leadership as unrelated to the number of people who are available to be hired as principal (i.e., certified) but related to individuals possessing the training, skill, and knowledge to succeed in today’s schools. Throughout this dissertation I refer to the goal of having enough “fully prepared” emerging principals; this requires “highly qualified” leaders using “strong leadership” in schools.

In today’s world, the school principal functions as the educational and instructional leader in schools. Lunenberg and Ornstein (2000) defined leaders of education as ones who promote, supervise, evaluate, and coordinate school curriculum. It is of utmost importance that schools are staffed with highly qualified leaders because they are the only ones who have been found to be associated with maximizing academic success of pupils. Research (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004) underscores the importance of a highly qualified leader. According to Davis et al. (2005), “successful school leaders affect student achievement through the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational processes” (p. 100).

Since 2000 principal leadership has come into the forefront with research concluding that strong leadership affects student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Strong leadership is critical to school reform, these researchers indicated that the effects of successful leadership are largest where as well as when they are needed the most; strong leadership has its greatest impact where pupils face challenging circumstances. As well, they found that there are no documented reports of difficult schools that were turned around without a strong leader. Authors of a 2004

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) study concurred with the need for strong leaders, finding that principal leadership accounts for 20% of a school's impact on student achievement. Clearly, leadership is a critical variable in pupil achievement.

A former state Superintendent of Schools in Virginia, Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, affirmed that strong leadership is essential in raising student achievement. She stated that, "In every successful school you will find a principal who understands how children learn, insists on best practices and effective instruction, and knows how to organize, lead, and inspire teachers" (Virginia Department of Education, 2004).

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), the "effective research" of the 1980s identified the vital importance of principals who function as strong instructional leaders in improving academic achievement. Earlier research had identified the crucial role of principals in recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers as well as creating a learning culture within schools (Leithwood et al., 2004).

In 2004, Mid-Continent Research for Education and Training (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies encompassing 2,802 schools having 14,000 teachers with 1.4 million pupils (Waters & Grubb, 2004). McREL's research concluded major findings supporting the claim that school-level leadership makes a difference in student achievement. When expressed as a correlation, the average effect size is $+0.25$; one standard deviation improvement in principal leadership was associated with a 10 percentile positive difference in student achievement on norm-referenced standardized tests. The McREL meta-analysis indicated that leadership has a positive impact on student achievement, but it can also have a marginal or even negative impact (i.e., reduction in student achievement). Achievement of pupils shows increased impact correlations as high as $+0.50$ with effective school leadership practices.

McREL researchers reported that when leaders fail to understand which strong leadership practices have a positive association with student achievement, they may use inappropriate leadership practices that yield a negative influence with a subsequent decline in student achievement (Waters & Grubb, 2004). These McREL analyses also identified 66 leadership practices, used by principals in fulfilling 21 responsibilities that have significant positive relationships with student achievement.

A study by Kirst, Haertel, and Williams (2005) found that school leadership is the key factor in high achieving schools. Principals in this study lead reform while managing school improvement. As well-shaped vision is developed, data both support instruction as well as drive decisions for giving needy pupils help. As Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) stated, “Knowing leadership matters is one thing, but developing it is quite another. What do we know about how to develop principals who can successfully transform schools?” (p. 1).

The Wallace Foundation has committed funding to support research in educational leadership. In a Wallace Foundation (2006) publication, the president of the foundation (Christine DeVita), referred to America’s underperforming schools and children being, “unlikely to succeed until we get serious about leadership” (p. 1). She believes that it is the principal who is responsible for good teaching and learning and also disallowing ineffective practices in the classroom. DeVita also suggested that it is the quality of training the principals receive before assuming their positions that determines whether they can meet the “increasingly tough expectations” of the job (Wallace Foundation, 2006, p. 3).

In 2005, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) reported that strong leadership affects student achievement. This report, *Innovative Pathways to Leadership*, indicated that extensive research over the past 20 years has contributed to an understanding of

strong leadership characteristics as well as best practices for developing strong principals. Then Secretary of Education Rod Paige stated that, “We know from decades of research and common sense that a strong school leader is an indispensable ingredient for school improvement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. v). The report also stated that the most significant finding emerging from the research is that, “leadership matters—a lot” (United States Department of Education, 2005, p. 10). With the awareness that highly qualified leaders are critical components influencing student achievement, it is crucial to hone in on the best ways to develop emerging school leaders.

History of Principal Preparation Programs

A historical view of the role of the principal and principal preparation in the United States shows that the topic of school leadership preparation has been discussed for over 100 years; calls for reform are in the forefront. This subsection initially focuses solely on the earliest history through the 1980s and is followed by another subsection that reviews history since the 1980s and includes reform movements.

History of Educational Leadership Through 1980s

From the origins of this country in the 1600s through the late 1890s education belonged to respective communities and was controlled by community leaders (Berry & Breach, 2006; Tyack, 1974). Generally, education was located in homes, churches, or rural one-room school houses. Often the teacher also took care of administrative tasks until circuit riders began to oversee up to 10 one-room school houses.

There were no formal standards and no bureaucracy was established until the 1890s when reformers attempted to “formalize the haphazard selection and supervision of teachers and superintendents” (Tyack, 1974, p. 21). Educational supervision and administration was

professionally unskilled until 1879 when the first formal administrative training program was instituted at the University of Michigan (Ray, Hack, & Condoli, 2001; Tyack, 1974).

The first course at the University of Michigan was entitled School Supervision and supplemented by a textbook written by William H. Payne (1875). This text was prescriptive in approach and a milestone for educational administration as a field. In 1886, Payne wrote, “Graduates of the university are called to supervise the more important public schools of the state. Why should they not have the opportunity to learn the theory of school supervision?” (cited in Berry & Breach, 2006, p. 4). The topics studied in the 1890s parallel coursework required for licensure in Virginia today: theory and foundation, powers (law), ethics, the art of grading schools (evaluations), reports and records (finance), and examinations (assessment and data).

In the last quarter of the 19th century future President Woodrow Wilson, an assistant professor of educational leadership, composed an essay titled, “The Study of Administration”; it promoted administration as a course of study. Wilson wrote, “The object of administrative study is to rescue executive methods from the confusion and costliness of empirical experiment and set them upon foundations laid deep in stable principle” (cited in Berry & Breach, 2006, p. 4). Woodrow Wilson’s essay led to more focus on the skills needed for the enlarging school bureaucracy.

In the early 1900s, educational administration became established as a course of study when Columbia University offered a doctoral degree in the field. The 1903-1904 catalog for Columbia University listed courses that parallel educational leadership programs today, including School Administration, Practicum, Seminar, and a different Practicum.

These courses delved into management issues, building and maintenance, personnel, evaluations of teachers, functions of school boards, grading, promotions, examinations, record keeping, and community cooperation. The two different practicum courses at Columbia in 1903-1904 addressed topics related to organization, law and policy, as well as social conditions. In 1905, Elwood Cubberly was a graduate of the first doctoral degree program. Cubberly wrote a textbook in 1916 that became widely used for principal training; in it he promoted school supervision as, “a new profession, and one which in time will play a very important part in the development of American life” (cited in Berry & Breach, 2006, p. 5).

With the rise of the industrial revolution, corporate America needed a trained workforce. This change from a primarily agricultural to the industrial era led to subsequent changes in schools. From 1910 to 1960 one-room schools declined from approximately 200,000 to 20,000. The modernization of schools led to better school buildings, standardized and contemporary courses, and better qualified teachers and administrators. In the 1920s, the Department of Secondary School Principals was established within the National Education Association. The creation of this department indicated the official recognition of the position of school principals by a national body of professional educators (Vick, 2004).

In training principals, practice over theory dominated the administration field throughout the first half of the 20th century until the next reform movement was instituted in 1946 by the American Association for School Advancement. This new reform called for more emphasis on research, theory, and academically grounded preparation for future school leaders.

During the 1940s and early 1950s, universities with educational administration courses moved toward a scientific method of preparation that was grounded in the theory and science of administration. This put more pressure on universities to shift from practical preparation content

toward a more scholarly and academic focus. Berry and Breach (2006) referred to the training of administrators in the mid-20th century as a “three way framework of practice, professional knowledge, and academic scholarship” (p. 6).

By 1960 shifts in the preparation of school leaders began to focus more heavily upon academic preparation (Glass, 2004; Iannacone, 1976). Balancing theory, academic knowledge, and practical instruction was a topic of debate throughout the remainder of the 20th century and remains a subject of discussion with current educational leaders in the 21st century (Berry & Breach, 2006). A national survey and analysis of alumni from educational leadership schools provided perceptions of large gaps between what is taught in education schools and what school administrators need to do their jobs (Levine, 2005).

History Since the 1980s and Reform Movements

There were several major attempts to reform preparation programs in educational administration in the latter half of the 20th century (Effinger, 2005). A significant reform movement was highlighted in 1983 in a report entitled *A Nation at Risk*, which put the spotlight on school leaders and demanded accountability in schools (Levine, 2005). The accountability placed more responsibility and focus on school leadership and the need for highly qualified principals in every school.

The history of district-based principal preparation programs has origins in the three major reform movements of the 1980s to the present as discussed earlier in this chapter. The 1983 *A Nation At Risk* report highlighted the need for school reform and demanded accountability. The 1987 *Leader's for America's Schools* recommended closing three-fifths of graduate programs in school leadership. The report indicated that fewer than 200 of the country's 505 graduate programs in educational leadership were capable of meeting necessary standards of excellence

and the rest should be closed. In actuality, the numbers of programs has increased to 1,206 since 1987 rather than decreased (Levine, 2005). The 2003 Thomas Fordham Foundation and Eli Broad Foundation Report, *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto*, also sheds light on the need for principal preparation reforms.

More reform movements occurred between the 1980s and 2000 with several criticisms of public schools and preparation programs for school leaders. In 1987, the National Commission for Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA) distributed a report entitled *Leaders for America's Schools*. The commission suggested that administrative preparation programs should be modeled after other professional schools (e.g., military, medical). It also proposed that public schools should become full partners with universities in the preparation of school administrators (Effinger, 2005). Critics suggested alternatives, “developed and managed not by universities, but by schools, divisions, and states” (Levine, 2005, p. 18). In 2000, 13 years after the commission’s report in 1987, some school divisions began to participate in the preparation of school leaders (Effinger, 2005).

In 1988, the National Policy Board on Educational Administration was established per the commission recommendation of NCEEAA. The goals of this board were to provide an increase in the number of exemplary training models for the preparation of educational leaders (Effinger, 2005).

A major development occurred in 1996 with the creation of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, chaired by Dr. Joseph Murphy. This consortium’s work resulted in the initial set of ISLLC Standards, the first universal set of standards for school leaders in the United States. They were adopted in 1996, revised in 2007, approved in 2008, and currently form the basis for preparation

programs used by 46 states (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007). Equally important was that in 2005 a national accreditation organization, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), adopted the ISLLC Standards for accrediting leadership preparation programs. ISLLC standards are described in further detail in the standards section of this review of literature.

Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2003) suggested alternatives to preparation of educational leaders that were developed and managed by school divisions and states rather than solely by universities. According to Murphy et al. (2007), a “significant body of work” (p. 9) highlighted weaknesses in the preparation of school leaders. Murphy found these publications focused on the need for reform and made suggestions for alternative pathways (e.g., collaboration) for principal preparation.

Additional reports helped fuel the recent reform movement for educational administration. *A License to Lead* (Hess, 2003) and *Educating School Leaders* (Levine, 2005), spotlighted further attention on school leaders. These reports called for fundamental changes in three areas: deregulation of principal preparation programs, improvement of principal preparation programs, and professional reform initiatives (Murphy et al., 2007).

The history of traditional principal preparation programs was summarized in 2001 by the Institute for Educational Leadership using alphabet mnemonics. This IEL report suggested that the first half of the 20th century was focused on the four B's: Bonds, Budgets, Buses, and Buildings, as schools grew in size and complexity to meet the needs of an industrialized society. By the 1970s administrators focused on the four R's: Race, Resources, Relationships, and Rules. In the 1980s, school leaders focused on the four A's: Academic standards, Accountability,

Autonomy, and Ambiguity. Into the first decade of the 21st century, school leaders focused on the five C's: Collaboration, Community, Connection, Child Advocacy, and Community Building (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001).

A 4-year national study was conducted by Columbia Teacher's College and supported by the Wallace Foundation (Levine, 2005). This report indicated that the United States had 1,206 schools, colleges and departments of education that were included in 57% of all 4-year universities. They awarded more degrees than any other major departments: 1 out of every 12 bachelor's diplomas was awarded in the field of education; one-fourth of all master's degrees and 16% of all doctoral degrees were in the field of education. There were 562 schools and/or departments of education that graduated 57% of school administrators earning master's degrees each year. In 2003, these educational leadership programs produced 15,000 master's degrees in educational administration, which were approximately one-eighth of all master's degrees in education. They also awarded 2,300 doctoral degrees, which were approximately one-third of all doctorates awarded in education at the time. This means that since 1987, when it was recommended that three-fifths of all graduate programs in educational leadership be closed, the number of programs actually increased in number.

The Levine (2005) report also addressed social changes that dramatically affect pupils, families, and schools by stating, "Education schools are blamed for intractable social problems they did not create and cannot solve" (p. 5). This report further suggested that schools of education were also faulted for the qualities of people who choose to become teachers and administrators. Levine's report stated that there were 250,000 school leaders, "appointed to and educated for jobs that do not exist" (p. 12). Levine's point was that emerging principals are not

prepared to carry out the myriad responsibilities assigned to them in the rapidly changing school environment.

Principals surveyed by Murphy (2003) reported gaps between what they learned in principal preparation coursework and what they actually needed to be able to do their jobs. Only 68% of surveyed principals found their courses valuable, with practical courses such as school law, child and adolescent psychology, and instructional leadership in the top three.

Effinger (2005) concurred that societal changes require changes in administrator preparation. This author indicated that with a global economy and vast information technology era, pupils must learn problem solving, construct knowledge, and the use of technology. There have been increasing numbers of children affected by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, crime, drugs, malnutrition, poor physical health, single parent families, and structural changes in the family. Society has sought to reduce the role of government and increase consumer control. This has resulted in a change from professional control to increasing lay-professional control. Effinger (2005) stated that, “managerial tasks are changing from a bureaucratic system to a more communal governance of schooling as parents and teachers gain a larger voice in school operations” (p. 18).

In 2001 Murphy wrote about societal and governance changes by describing these changes as moving from a behavioral to a constructivist view of learning and teaching. These changes must be addressed in preparation programs for future school leaders. Effinger (2005) further recommended that the current system of recruiting and preparing future school leaders has to change as the requirements and roles of the profession change.

In 2005 the United States Department of Education published a report, *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership*, that indicated traditional educational administration programs

and certification procedures were producing insufficient numbers of effective leaders. This report called for states to consider alternative methods of preparing principals. In his introduction to this report, Secretary of Education, Rod Paige stated, “Traditional principal preparation programs are unlikely to customize or personalize coursework to prepare potential principals to effectively lead schools with the characteristics of those in which they will work” (United States Department of Education, 2005, p. 3).

In professional literature, leaders in the field have continued to call for reform in educational leadership programs. According to Murphy et al. (2007), leverage for changes had developed and states had deregulated provisions of leadership preparation. The changes and deregulated provisions opened up preparation of emerging principals to new participants.

Multiple scholars in educational leadership have published endorsements of reform and changes in principal preparation. Korach (2005) called for changes that must happen if schools are to achieve the school improvement and accountability goals. Fullan (2008) described change of this nature as a political challenge that requires new kinds of learning and communication that can stand strong against the many forces pulling educational leadership back to the status quo. This view was shared by Waters et al., (2003) when they described the barriers to reform and necessary leadership skills as being different from the instruction received in university-based programs. The bottom line is that new skills, capacity, and actions are needed for schools to be able to meet the needs of all pupils so they may attain proficiency that meets academic standards. Facing new roles and heightened expectations, new principals require new forms of training (Lashway, 2003).

While the early history of university-based principal preparation programs portrays a cycle of reform movements, the core preparation of school leaders remained constant. The

content and topics (e.g., Foundations, School Law, Finance, Personnel, Community Relations, and Ethics) in the preparation programs for new school leaders have been ongoing for over 100 years.

In the history of traditional principal preparation programs, the literature has shown evidence of a “reform churn” (Murphy et al., 2007) over the last 25 years. For over a century the lack of change in preparation of emerging leaders substantiates the need for this study. Levine (2005) posed a fundamental question about how school leaders should be prepared. Discernment in responding to his question requires critical examination.

Current Status of the Principalship

A national problem described in the literature is the shortage of fully prepared principals who are willing and able to take on the challenges of the principalship. The major cause of principal shortages found in the literature relates to the number and gravity of challenges inherent in the principalship today (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). Other kinds of challenges play a lesser role in causing shortages. The problem of principal shortage and underlying challenges triggering it provide a frame to view the existing need for significantly more principals who are not only endorsed, but also fully prepared.

Shortages of Principals

The major concern of school divisions is the lack of fully prepared principals. Since 1990 shortages of highly qualified (endorsed) candidates who use strong leadership in the principalship have been reported by school districts across the nation (Levine, 2005).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) survey data (2003) indicated a shortage of principal applicants ranging from 50% to 75% based upon national

surveys of principals and superintendents. Over half of all school divisions responding to this survey reported a shortage of fully prepared candidates.

Results of a national study found that 90% of California school divisions included in the study reported shortages of secondary principal candidates and 73% reported shortages of elementary principal candidates (Levine, 2005). This study also predicted that in some parts of the nation, 60% to 75% of principals will have retired, resigned, or otherwise left their positions by 2009.

Davis et al. (2005) framed the issue as having less to do with “dwindling supply than with the inequitable distribution of qualified candidates in suburban and affluent communities” (p. 5). In 2000, rural states such as Vermont reported more unfilled positions than previously. According to the professional literature, geographical location is a factor in shortages of principal applicants.

In 2003, the National Association of Elementary School Principals survey data showed that 66% of school principals planned to retire within the next 6 to 10 years. Maryland expected 600 principal vacancies, or 45% of the total, due to retirements in the 2003-2004 school year. Nationally, 50% of all principals reached retirement age in the 1990s. In 2005, 75% of Minnesota’s high school principals were eligible to retire. The NAESP survey data also revealed that principals were retiring earlier with an average age of 57, and that more than half of all principals surveyed nationally planned to retire as soon as they were eligible. This survey also indicated that 66% of principals planned to retire between 2008 through 2012 (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003).

According to the NAESP Fact Sheet on the Principal Shortage (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003), in California 73% of 376 superintendents reported smaller

candidate pools for the increased vacancies and defined the pool as a shortage. According to a 2001 survey supported by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 60% of superintendents said they must “take what you can get” when hiring principals (Cardman, 2003). A nationwide policy report from Michigan State University indicated that 60% of superintendents reported a shortage of qualified principal candidates (Cusick, 2003).

The problem of shortages was predicted to be worse than previously expected. Mitgang (2003) indicated that the number of positions in educational administration would grow as much as 25% between 2003 and 2008. A 13% increase in job openings for school principals between 2000 and 2010 was predicted by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2002 (United States Department of Education, 2002).

According to Levine (2005), leadership is a critical topic in order to provide success in schools. In the Columbia report Levine stated, “If the decade ahead resembles the past two, more than 40% of current principals and a far higher proportion of superintendents can be expected to leave their jobs” (p. 5).

A report on supply and demand of instructional personnel in Virginia revealed shortages in the principalship (Virginia Department of Education, 2004a). According to the final report of the *Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership in Virginia* (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2003), nearly half of administrators statewide planned to retire or leave their positions between 2006 and 2008. The 2001-2002 Virginia supply/demand report had found a need to replace approximately 40% of all administrators by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (Virginia Department of Education, 2004a).

The Virginia Principals Study conducted in 2001 by the College of William and Mary, in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) and the

Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), concluded that the shortage of principals in Virginia is “real and serious” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 3). Their study found that 56% of Virginia’s principals and assistant principals planned to retire by 2010.

Challenges Causing Principal Shortages

Shortages in the field of educational leadership can be examined when considering underlying causes, referred to as challenges in this dissertation. Research indicates that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified principal applicants (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2005a; Levine, 2005). The 55,000 division superintendents across the nation face difficulties filling principal positions due in part to “too many insignificant, yet time-consuming demands that plague education leaders in the new millennium” (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2004, p. 4).

Principals are on the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. The list of all roles for principals includes: educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leader, assessment experts, disciplinarian, community builder, public relations expert, budget analyst, facility managers, special program administrators, expert overseers of legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives, broker of conflicts between various interest groups (parents, teachers, pupils, district officials, state and federal agencies), and being “sensitive to a widening range of student needs” (Davis et al., 2005, p. 4).

The challenges are initially addressed through the lens of internal challenges inherent in the principalship; these challenges reside in the individual school as well as school division. Most internal challenges are typical of all schools within a particular school division, although some challenges may be owed to certain schools (e.g., those with crumbling buildings). Furthermore, the challenges are obvious, thus anticipated by applicants for the principalship.

External challenges stem from factors outside the school division and beyond the scope of the job responsibilities and conditions faced by principals.

Internal Challenges of the Principalship

Job responsibilities and conditions facing principals form the crucible for internal challenges. These are the expected, known, or predicted challenges inherent in the position of principal. Internal challenges may include the extra responsibilities that accompany leadership roles such as supervisory tasks, extra work hours, extra stress, longer hours than teachers, minimal pay increases between teacher salaries, and unfavorable work conditions.

As attention on school leadership and reform has increased, other professional groups involved in reform concluded that reforming the principalship has been overlooked during the past two decades (Davis et al., 2005). A significant report funded by the Wallace Foundation (2006) referred to the wide range of competencies now required of school administrators. The demands of the job requirements exceed the, “reasonable capacities of any one person” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 4). This report indicated that demands have changed so dramatically that traditional methods of preparing principals are no longer adequate to meet the challenges in public schools. As Hess and Kelly (2005b) found in a survey of 93,000 principals, most of them feel the job is not “doable.”

High stakes accountability also contributes to deterring teacher leaders who might otherwise apply for a job as principal. Scarpa (2005) framed the problem of attracting and retaining highly qualified administrators as related to, “difficult working conditions, a lack of incentives, and an unmanageable range of responsibilities” (p. 17). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) referred to the principal’s role as including a “staggering array of professional tasks and

competencies” (p. 4). They believe that the demands of the job have changed so that traditional methods of preparing new principals are no longer adequate.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2003) reported a lack of desire on the part of certified principal candidates to apply for a principalship. In a national survey, over two-thirds of responding principals expressed concern over difficulty in attracting qualified candidates to the field. As was mentioned previously, the top six were: low salary, work-related stress, long hours, minimal support, increasing responsibilities and minimal difference from teachers’ salaries (Educational Research Service, 2006). These concerns parallel reasons given by teachers who hold administrative licensure but have chosen to remain in the classroom. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing reported 34,000 potential principal candidates with credentials on file, but teachers reported they do not want the high pressure, long hours, new responsibilities, and a salary that only provides an average of \$16.00 more per day for secondary levels and \$5.00 more per day for elementary levels (Levine, 2005).

In seeking to understand the shortages, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008) reported that principals work longer days than teachers, work nights and weekends as well as 12 months a year. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, cited in the NAESP Fact Sheet (2008), also reported that principals work more than 55 hours per week including nights and weekends. The National Association of Elementary School Principal’s 10-year study reported that the typical principal works 10 to 12-hour days and 60 to 80-hour work weeks (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). As a *Los Angeles Times* story titled “Principal: A Tougher Job, Fewer Takers” stated, “Fifteen-hour work days, unending paperwork, and the ever-increasing role of school board politics. . . .Plenty have the credentials for the job. . .many don’t want it” (Richardson, 1999, as cited by Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The NAESP Fast Facts (2003) reported by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran in 2003 revealed that 84% of Virginia's principals worked more than 50 hours per week and two-thirds of Virginia principals conveyed insufficient time and personnel to fulfill mandated tasks as the instructional leader. The surveyed principals also experienced frustrations with increased hours, stress, expanding duties, and decreased job "doability" (p. 15).

Salaries for new principals can be as minimal as 10% more than veteran teachers. Between highly experienced teachers and new administrators, the average daily pay rate may actually be less for the principal.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2003) found concerns related to: high-stakes testing, accountability for factors beyond their control, fragmentation of their time, and focus upon management issues rather than instructional leadership. In a later report (2008), NAESP found the preceding concerns to contribute to principals' stress. The same NAESP survey reported the top three discouraging factors underlying the principal shortages, cited by nationally surveyed superintendents, as being insufficient compensation compared to responsibilities (58%), too much time required for the job (25%), and the job being overly stressful (23%). Percentages were comparable across community type and grade-level subgroups.

A Michigan State University study found reasons underlying the principal shortages to include increasing retirements, added hours and stress, minimal pay differences, and social reasons that make the principalship "burdensome and unappealing" (Cusick, 2003, p. 4). Expanding tasks, increased accountability, 12 to 15 hour work days, school events, athletics, and challenging parents are just a few of the reasons cited in the Cusick study. New and increased rules about everything imaginable including cell phones, technology, pornography on the

Internet, zero tolerance, and weapons add to the internal challenges principals face. This study also compared tasks that once took 15 minutes for a principal to complete now requiring days or months. Conflicting situations and obligations are the norm and principals may not receive the support of the school division when faced with parental or community criticism. One assistant principal stated, “I see what my principal does and I don’t want to do it” (Cusick, 2003, p. 3).

Reading this section on challenges inherent in the principalship makes it clear that studies and surveys reach the same findings related to inherent causes of the shortages. Most of the causes for shortages of principals are internal challenges inherent to the job.

External Challenges of the Principalship

Challenges caused by forces external to schools are similar to internal challenges in one respect; the challenges are beyond the control of the principal. These external challenges may include societal issues and pressures, increasing accountability requirements, increasing special education laws and requirements, inadequate resources including budget and personnel, parental pressures, and the lack of preparation to handle the aforementioned challenges.

Beyond previously described external factors, leaders in education face more new issues and challenges than in the past due to societal changes and accountability requirements (Norton, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, 2006). Leaders were described by Hess (2003) as needing to know how to “leverage accountability and revolutionary technology, devise performance-based evaluation systems, recruit and cultivate nontraditional staff, drive decisions with data, build professional learning cultures, and ensure that every child is served” (p. 1).

According to Effinger (2005) changes in society mean that students must learn new skills. A global economy along with technology advances has also led to changes in schools.

Increasing numbers of children are affected by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, crime, drugs, malnutrition, poor physical health, and single parent families.

Effinger (2005) indicated that society has been seeking to reduce the role of government while increasing consumer control; this pendulum swing also affects schools. Schools have changed from professional toward untrained lay-professional control. Managerial tasks have also changed from a bureaucratic system to a more communal governance of schooling as parents and community members have gained a larger voice in school operations (Effinger, 2005).

Another external challenge relates to the accountability requirements to fulfill the No Child Left Behind Act (United States Department of Education, 2002). Under this federal law, pupil achievement is expected to show annual gains culminating with 100% pupil pass rates on required tests by 2013. Every school is expected to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by reaching Annual Measurable Objectives which increase incrementally every year through 2013.

As an example of increased pressure, with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (United States Department Of Education, 2002) the emphasis became student achievement and increased levels of proficiency. The annual increasing academic requirements of this federal law resulted in more time to implement the requirements of the law as well as develop the necessary leadership skills. In order to accomplish these externally mandated annual goals of high expectations and accountability, principals are expected to lead with a “sense of urgency” (Korach, 2005, p. 113).

In a longitudinal study conducted by Stanford University, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) identified two external causes underlying the principal shortage. One was the lack of high-potential candidates who are attracted to the field. The second external cause was that

aspiring principals are not prepared to handle the challenges of instructional leadership and school improvement.

According to the 2004 Southern Regional Education Board report, the shortage problem was related to self-selection of candidates for principal preparation programs. This SREB report stated, “The volunteer system produces many more certified principal candidates than are needed to fill positions, but school districts still have difficulty hiring principals prepared to do the job” (p. 6). The volunteer system refers to self-selection into a principal preparation program versus school division personnel “tapping” potential school leaders to encourage them to apply for a school district-based principal preparation program. The seasoned leader usually serves as mentor to the one who was tapped.

A Commonwealth of Virginia Policy Brief Survey (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2004) reported findings based on their public agenda survey of 853 superintendents and 909 principals. The survey revealed 47% who said that principals leave the field due to politics and bureaucracy, unreasonable demands brought about by higher standards and accountability (34%), and low prestige (14%).

Conclusions on Principal Shortages and Challenges

As presented in the previous section, principals face unrealistic expectations without the necessary preparation to use strong leadership in schools. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) indicated that better training by itself will not solve the increasing school leadership problems. Well-trained leaders who work in impossible job settings are not likely to succeed in improving schools. They contend that better training is part of the remedy for preparing highly qualified principals. Darling-Hammond et al. recommended recruiting potential leaders, preparing them

thoroughly and supporting them in their new positions, thus decreasing job turnover and increasing school reform results.

Levine (2005) suggested that educational leaders need to prepare the next generation of school leaders in new ways to meet societal challenges. Levine joined other educational researchers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2005b; Mitgang, 2003; Murphy et al., 2007) in calling for reforms in the preparation of emerging school leaders.

Principal Preparation Programs

From the early 1900s, when degree programs in educational leadership began, universities prepared public school principals for licensure and school leadership. Coupled with recent societal changes, the existing principal shortage resulted in a need for creative solutions. To prepare more “highly qualified” principals to meet the demand, partnerships between school divisions and universities began to grow in 2000. School-based principal preparation programs involve school division personnel in preparing emerging principals with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead America’s changing schools.

University-based Principal Preparation Programs

Universities have been the traditional source and primary vehicle for the preparation of principals since courses in educational leadership were first offered in 1886 then followed by the first degree program in 1905 (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). For over 100 years the topics and courses taught by university professors have remained essentially the same (Berry & Breach, 2006). Discussions about university programs have centered upon what to teach, by whom, and to whom, while remaining within the requirements of the respective Department of Education.

Preparation programs for principals in the United States have customarily focused on courses covering general management principles, school law, administrative requirements, and procedures; whereas pupil learning, effective teaching, professional development, curriculum, and organizational change received marginal emphasis (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Leading to licensure as a principal, university programs have offered courses, field experiences, and assessments aligned with requirements of the Department of Education in each state.

To earn a license to be a principal in Virginia the state requirements include seven courses, an internship, 3 years of classroom experience, and a passing score of 165 or above on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). There are 46 states that have similar requirements to become a principal.

Levine (2005) described university courses as including instructional leadership, school law, educational psychology, curriculum development, research methods, historical and philosophical foundations of education, teaching and learning, child and adolescent development, and the school principalship. The 2005 Columbia University meta-analysis of all national educational leadership programs related that more than 80% of all programs reported inclusion of these nine courses. The program of study (i.e., courses, field experiences, assessments) leading to licensure for university students follows state prescribed areas of emphasis for courses as well as other components.

In 2005 Levine found 562 schools and departments of education had granted master's degrees in educational administration across the country. These schools graduated 62% of teachers educated at the master's level and 57% of school administrators who had earned degrees annually. Doctoral granting universities had awarded 42% of degrees to school administrators.

Lashway (2005) described the majority of educational leadership programs as including seven core courses and an internship. Lashway viewed admission to most programs in educational leadership as determined by self-selection with little screening or recruitment to encourage prospective leaders.

In 2007, the Department of Education in Virginia reported that 38 universities offered a program of study in educational leadership. These programs led to a master's degree, post-master's certificate, or post-master's degree that met state requirements for endorsement as a principal (Virginia Department of Education, 2007).

The Southern Regional Educational Board (2006) portrayed the decision to admit a university student to a program in educational leadership as dependent on the applicant's Graduate Record Exam (GRE) score and grade point average (GPA) in undergraduate and/or graduate programs. Lashway (2003) cited Creighton and Jones (2002) finding that only 6% of all principal preparation programs utilized "personal interviews" as part of the admission process. Only 40% of these programs reported that they required teaching experience to apply to a university program in educational leadership.

Davis et al. (2005) depicted aspiring principals as readily admitted to university programs based on academic performance. Furthermore, they described universities as passing students through programs based solely on academic performance rather than a comprehensive assessment of knowledge and skills needed to successfully lead schools.

Using an analytical framework based on quality indicators for the major dimensions included in traditional principal preparation programs, Murphy et al. (2007) analyzed 54 leadership programs in the six states that had been conducting comprehensive state reforms over a 15-year period. A scoring guide for quality indicators was developed in relation to clinical

setting, recruitment, program curriculum, student assessment, as well as other dimensions. Programs were rated according to self-assessments, national and state reviewers, and reviews by “critical friends.” Results of this longitudinal study led the authors to conclude that “despite lessons of 30 years of research, most institutions continue to approach program change as an administrative function to be accomplished with the least expenditure of time and resources” (Murphy et al. 2007, p. 26). Most program developers continue to follow an “unproductive preparation paradigm.”

According to a Stanford University report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), some states were attempting different approaches to leadership preparation. Iowa, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Louisiana have pressured colleges and universities to update their principal preparation programs. Iowa, for example, eliminated weak university preparation programs. Some states added more practical aspects to their university requirements (e.g., working alongside practicing principals).

School District-based Principal Preparation Programs

Partnering schools and universities has become a palpable movement to meet the skyrocketing need for fully prepared principals who can assume responsibility for learning and achievement in a rapidly changing society. The professional literature identifies multiple characteristics of school district-based principal preparation programs. The main characteristic that distinguishes them from university-based programs is involvement by school division personnel.

The school division is the beneficiary of the “product,” which is well-prepared new leaders who understand the specific needs of their respective schools. Smaller school divisions have also combined forces to partner with a university in preparing principals (DeMary, 2005).

The professional literature identifies multiple characteristics of school district-based principal preparation programs. The main characteristic that distinguishes them from university-based programs is involvement by school division personnel.

Throughout the past decade the promotion of school and university partnerships was recommended by multiple leaders in the field of education. In 2005, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) leaders, largely composed of professors, called for reform in principal preparation that included partnerships with schools (Hess & Kelly, 2005a).

School divisions across the country began taking active roles in preparing emerging leaders in 2000. The roles of school divisions over the last decade ranged from informal leadership academies as staff development to full partnerships with universities to prepare new principals.

The early partnerships initiated by schools were oriented toward academies rather than formal preparation programs. The value on real-world practitioner training contributed to more recent collaborative efforts between schools and universities when developing formal principal preparation programs that lead to licensure (Murphy et al., 2007).

Black and Murtadha (2006) strongly encouraged those at the national, state, and urban district levels, as well as professors in educational leadership to, “question how best to prepare leaders, particularly given existing shortages of highly qualified principals and superintendents and the complex demands of leading school reform” (p. 3).

The Wallace Foundation supports research for educational leadership. Concerned about principal preparation leading to fully qualified rather than merely certified principals, in 2006 a foundation report indicated that, “aspiring administrators may be certified, but they may not be

fully prepared for the shifting role of the principal from manager to effective instructional leader” (Wallace Foundation, 2006, p. 5).

So, too, did Davis et al. (2005) conclude that traditionally prepared, new administrators may be certified but not fully prepared to shift from managerial roles to effective instructional leadership. There is research on how principals influence pupil achievement, but, less is known about how to prepare principals to develop skills that make a difference in how schools function and how pupils learn (Davis et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2007). A Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI) report indicated that we have insufficient knowledge about how to develop leaders (Davis et al., 2005).

Korach (2005) described school and university partnerships as collaboration between a university and a large school division for the specific purpose of improving preparation so that pupils benefit from increased academic achievement. There is wide agreement in the professional literature that schools with high achievement are led by well-prepared principals using strong leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 2007). The Institute for Educational Leadership (2001) put it another way when emphasizing that school divisions must make improved student learning a priority. This requires topflight leadership by fully qualified principals.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) described the school division trend to partner with universities in principal preparation as an increasingly attractive way to fill the administrative pipeline with qualified candidates who are well versed in the needs of the sponsoring district. The push for higher pupil achievement also is clear in the No Child Left Behind Act (United States Department of Education, 2002); schools must show

measurable gains in achievement regardless of race, minority status, disability, economic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency.

With the considerable national attention on accountability in schools, the spotlight turned to the issue of principal preparation early in the decade. National trends in partnerships were described by Davis et al. (2005) as a university and school division collaborating with content as well as who delivers it (e.g., professor, school personnel) with variance across partnerships depending on preferences, availability, and needs. The partnerships they described offered a continuum of professional experiences and the university often maintained authority over the principal preparation while the division took a stronger role in ongoing leadership development of “sitting principals.”

A 2007 Wallace conference report described states as just beginning to develop new systems that aim for the goal of placing a well-trained principal in every school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Davis et al. (2005) described a proliferation of innovations in leadership development during the first half of the decade and recommended evaluations of these innovations. Evaluations of principal preparation programs would support the University Continuing Education Association recommended reform and assist with eliminating programs not meeting the stated need for fully qualified principals.

The literature continues to expand with reports of nontraditional approaches to preparing new principals. In 2004, the U.S. Department of Education referred to school division participation in leadership preparation as “bold new approaches” indicating that the developers of “grow your own” programs viewed traditional principal preparation as missing the mark for their particular schools.

Berry and Breach (2006) summarized the most recent statewide reform movements responding to principal shortages. They viewed school divisions as having embraced the changes involved in alternate routes to licensure including partnerships with universities. The Wallace Foundation report (2006) observed that the focus on principal preparation programs intensified over time.

Murphy et al. (2007) presented six alternative models of principal preparation in existence, including: alternative university models; professional models that transfer responsibilities for preparation from universities to professional associations; district models where the employer is the “prime actor in preparation” (p. 13); entrepreneurial models utilized mainly by philanthropic organizations employing creative individuals outside universities; private models for profit; and experiential models that substitute experience for coursework.

Nationally and in Virginia school divisions responded to current and anticipated principal shortages by choosing with whom and how they would collaborate in the preparation of aspiring principals (Morrison, 2005). Schools have often taken a proactive approach in growing their own leaders by having aspiring principals learn from practicing principals, an internship, and a network or cohort of colleagues.

After university principal preparation programs in Mississippi were closed, the new leadership program, created at Delta State University, was referred to as “exemplary” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). This program offered 3-day professional development workshops and gave teachers a year-long, fully paid sabbatical allowing them to enroll full-time in courses leading to licensure as a principal.

Morrison (2005) conducted an evaluation study of grow-your-own principal preparation programs in a Maryland school division. In the review of literature in Morrison's dissertation, he noted that school divisions around the country were creating leadership programs for aspiring principals and often worked with institutions of higher education and neighboring school divisions to pool resources in the development and implementation of school district-based programs.

New York City founded a Leadership Academy in 2003 to groom new principals for critical turnaround jobs. Schools where graduates of this academy had been principals for 3 years had a 31% faster growth in pupils' achievement than did schools led by principals with comparable levels of experience who had not attended the academy (Morrison, 2005).

In Virginia, the Department of Education supported new partnerships using turnaround specialists backed by the state and the Wallace Foundation. Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, former Virginia Superintendent of Education and a head of a leadership center at VCU said, "Even the most skilled, hardest working principal cannot turn a school around on his own. They need districts to be supportive—by creating a strike team to provide additional training and other services at the beginning of the turnaround" (Wallace, 2006, p. 10).

Partnerships between schools and universities have lead to licensure as well as the recognition that the field has not identified which program features/elements make a difference in preparing fully qualified principals able to employ strong leadership. Professional reflections and opinions as well as "findings" and conclusions lack the hard data that can guide program implementers in the future.

The Southern Regional Education Board described partnerships as "promising new practices that promote the requirement of universities to work with school divisions together to

select the right candidates and develop new programs...” (Southern Regional Education Board, 2006, p. 71). The selection process used as the gateway to a preparation program received emphatic support from SREB. Tapping a program feature used in school district-based preparation relies on sitting principals to select and refer likely candidates for preparation programs. Tapping may or may not result in a mentorship arrangement over time, and tapping as well as mentorship are advantageous recommendations for future research.

Proponents of partnerships (Davis et al., 2005) viewed the emergence of district owned and operated programs as an increasingly appealing way of preparing qualified candidates to address the needs and culture of the sponsoring school division. These authors reported that only a few school districts offered programs that helped teachers prepare for the principal role and then supported their new principals once they became school leaders. The lack of continued support once assuming the principalship is viewed as worthy of future research.

As described by Murphy et al. (2007), the issues of school leadership are complex and no one-size-fits-all approach will work in every school division. They found that academics and practitioners were not able to conclusively state exactly what it is that an effective school leader intentionally does to create school conditions and improve pupil outcomes. Future research aimed at determining actions of principals that result in higher achievement would provide information that preparation programs need to have fully qualified leaders.

Morrison (2005) referred to a statewide survey of school district-based preparation programs in Maryland in 2004; 12 of 17 programs were working in collaboration with universities. In his review of school district-based programs, Morrison concluded that, while there appeared to be a “growing number” of school division principal preparation programs, current research about them is limited.

The 2004 U. S. Department of Education report concluded that traditional principal preparation programs do not prepare potential principals to effectively lead schools that have similarities to characteristics of those in which they will work. The literature indicates that school divisions benefit from their direct involvement in preparing principals specifically for the needs of schools within their division (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). These conclusions support the development of varied preparation programs with research aimed toward determining how to meet the different needs across school divisions and/or particular schools within a division.

As evidenced by the paucity of research findings regarding school district-based preparation programs, specific research is needed to hone in on what makes a difference in preparing fully qualified principals. Also important is determining which features/elements used in preparation programs are most crucial to achieving the goal.

In the remainder of this subsection broader reform recommendations (Davis et al, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Murphy et al. 2007) are reviewed for principal preparation programs. A 2004 U.S. Department of Education report began with an introduction by former Secretary of Education Rod Paige, “A consensus is forming across political and ideological perspectives that our nation needs to tap new sources for school leaders, as well as support the talented educators already in the system” (p. v). This report detailed the past movement of innovative and effective paths to the principalship through 2003.

Berry and Breach (2006) suggested that the field of educational leadership tried to find a balance between an academic/theoretical approach and a practitioner-oriented program of study. University faculty members are professionals who are best prepared to instruct academics and theoretical foundations. Consideration must be given to the pressures of the practitioner in the

real world and newly licensed principals need preparation for the challenges they will face (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

In 2003, Murphy reminded professionals that the call for partnerships between academic and school entities had periodically been voiced for decades. In 2005, Effinger recommended preparing new school leaders through partnerships; suggesting it would be more likely to increase their success and maximize achievement of educational goals in schools. In 2007, Murphy et al. recommended establishing new relationships with school partnerships.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) also endorsed school and university partnerships by promoting collaboration between university programs and school divisions. This 2007 Stanford report indicated that traditional principal preparation programs have not sought potential outside resources from school divisions. Similarly, school divisions were not found to be attempting to establish partnerships with universities for preparing leaders or professional development.

The need for practical, clinical training has resulted in university collaboration with school divisions as equal partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating principal preparation programs. In other words, both universities and schools found these partnerships to be mutually beneficial.

A cautionary note about these new collaborative principal preparation efforts was highlighted by Davis et al. (2005) when they warned against falling back into teaching the same courses that have been taught for decades in a different setting. In order to close achievement gaps, improve student achievement, and hold all adults accountable for higher expectations, the school divisions must become engaged in the process of preparing their aspiring leaders (Korach, 2005).

Lashway (2003) advised that school districts collaborate with university programs to support development of leadership preparation in a variety of ways (e.g., program development, instructional delivery, etc.). Davis et al. (2005) advocated for school divisions to determine the form of training as well as the form(s) action projects assume. They proposed that principal training programs become practical, be conducted in schools and focused upon what works in education, as well as employ successful leadership strategies utilized in other fields (e.g., business, military).

Principal preparation programs are asked to make adaptations in order to meet the need of preparing highly qualified principals. Levine (2005) and the U. S. Department of Education (2004) concurred about alternative routes for administrator training needing to be implemented. In 2003, a report entitled *Better Leaders for America's Schools* called for school districts to play a major role in the preparation of their school leaders by obtaining the training from a variety of providers beyond the traditional university settings.

Effinger (2005) referenced the National Committee for Excellence in Education Administration reform recommendation that offered preparation programs that were modeled after other professional schools and making the school division a “full partner in the preparation of school administrators” (p. xvi). Proponents of school division partnerships with universities suggested a wide variety of models, yet all agreed that when faced with a large number of anticipated principal vacancies, it was imperative that alternative programs were developed.

The 2004 U. S. Department of Education report recommended alternative pathways for principal preparation including school and university partnerships. This report articulated an urgent need for principals who are capable of meeting higher expectations. The report recommended cohorts who train together, field-based experience, and more practical application

of coursework. The reforms were described as well intentioned but not yet meeting the needs of emerging leaders to successfully lead schools. The compelling need for large numbers of effective school leaders was viewed as requiring intensely focused preparation programs that, “strategically recruit and rigorously screen potential candidates, then immerse them in authentic coursework and integrated field experiences that prime candidates for success in challenging and demanding school settings” (United States Department of Education, 2004, p. 4).

The call for partnerships and new methods for training emerging principals was cast differently by Berry and Breach (2006) when they called for efforts to create competition, provided that the competition would be as effective as traditional university preparation programs.

A leading professor and author wrote a report entitled *Barriers and Gaps* (Fiore, 2002) summarizing the state of principal preparation and barriers to performance on-the-job. Fiore recommended that public schools should fully participate in the preparation of school administrators.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2006) urged state policymakers to make local school divisions full partners with universities in selection, support, and preparation of promising school leaders. This view was shared by Barber (2006) who indicated growing interest in the field to develop and study the effectiveness of new approaches to principal preparation. Barber (2006) cited research suggesting that school district-based principal preparation programs promote effective leadership practices and that school division personnel focus on the relationship between specific principal practices and positive school outcomes. Integrating practices and outcomes leads to innovative principal preparation programs that fully prepare emerging principals.

In sum, partnerships between universities and school divisions to prepare aspiring principals have significantly increased since 2000. It is interesting that this review contains several pages describing background compared to sparse research findings at the end of a decade of reforms. Also revealing is that numerous recommendations about broad changes in preparation are presented without research guiding the direction to specifics of implementation features/elements in principal preparation programs.

Elements of Principal Preparation Programs

As was made clear in the previous section of this review, principal preparation programs are delivered in various ways by universities and school district-based programs, including partnerships between the two. All programs include content that aligns with licensure requirements in respective states, discussed in the history section of the literature review. Licensure will be addressed through a different lens in the next section on Standards and Assessment. In this dissertation the many features used in principal preparation are referred to as program “elements.” Elements, too, are found in varying combinations across principal preparation programs. The professional literature is limited on effectiveness regarding how different elements play into preparing highly qualified educational leaders.

Elements of principal preparation programs appear in various combinations in school district-based principal preparation programs. Some of these are found in different university-based principal preparation programs. The primary difference important to school district-based programs is the active participation of school division personnel in the implementation of the program elements.

One of the elements that received some focus in the literature is the aspect of identification and selection of promising candidates for future principal positions.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) reported research findings from Stanford Educational Leadership Institute case studies which “powerfully confirms” that training programs need to be more selective in identifying promising leadership candidates as opposed to open enrollment. They also highlighted the need to be more focused on instructional leadership, integration of theory and practice, as well as the provision of improved preparation for effectively working with a school community. This SELI report particularly stressed the importance of internships with hands-on leadership opportunities.

Research, funded by the Wallace Foundation, was conducted by Stanford University (Davis et al., 2005) with 125 principals who had graduated from 1 of 4 exemplary programs. Personal perceptions of their principal preparation programs were compared with a national sample of 571 principals. This research aimed to add knowledge on the best ways to prepare highly qualified principals and determine the essential or effective elements of principal preparation. The stated purpose was to determine a, “clearer picture of what is known about specific program features and attributes that can influence the leaders’ beliefs and behaviors in ways that improve student learning” (Davis et al., 2005, p. 1). Reforms in the field have advised that principals would lead schools more successfully if methodology in preparing new leaders changed (Murphy, 2003).

In a school leadership study on *Developing Successful Principals* (Orr, 2007), results were positive for school district-based preparation approaches. In reviewing past research Orr reported finding few studies on the relationship between leadership preparation and effective leadership practices. Her study also reported evidence that high quality leadership programs have most or all of the following program features (referred to as elements in this study): rigorous selections, standards-based content and internship experiences, career counseling, student-

centered instruction, coherent and reflective experiences, and appropriately qualified faculty (Orr, 2007). The Orr study affirmed that the nature of leadership preparation has a, “moderating influence on leadership practices which directly and indirectly influence school improvement and student outcomes” (Orr, 2007, p. 12). In other words, the elements of leadership preparation experienced by the principal affects the success of the school community.

Orr (2007) found meager research on the relationship between leadership preparation and school improvement outcomes. Orr referenced Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin and Wilson (1996) who studied 11 “innovatively redesigned” (p. 6) preparation programs that found three program features most predictive of teacher perceptions of principals’ leadership effectiveness: instructional strategies, cohort membership, and program content. Orr (2007) indicated widespread agreement in the literature and in professional standards about the “essential features” of principal preparation programs. The 1996 study by Leithwood et al. laid a foundation for further study of principal preparation program features.

A review of research conducted by SELI and reported by Davis et al. (2005) found “strikingly little evidence” (p. 12) on program features and principal effectiveness. The empirical support for popular program features consists of self-reported candidate perceptions of their experiences and there was no evidence found regarding how graduates of different kinds of programs perform on the job. These authors also indicated there was sparse evidence or a connection found related to how program features later influenced on-the-job behavior.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) referenced a 2001 study by Valentine finding that principals who participated in a preparation program that was “concept driven, cohort-based, and consisting of a yearlong and mentored internship” (p. 8) scored higher on the SLLA, were perceived by teachers as more effective, and received higher performance evaluations.

A Southern Regional Education Board (2001) report listed proposed actions that every state and school division could take to prepare new principals. Some of the features recommended were tapping high performers into leadership preparation, emphasizing field-based experiences, linking licensure to performance with assessments and a two-tier licensure system, and promoting partnerships by cultivating leadership teams for preparing new principals.

In a SELI report (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), the introduction by DeVita, president of the Wallace Foundation, powerfully confirmed the importance of preparation programs being selective in identifying promising leadership candidates as opposed to open enrollment. This statement references tapping future leaders rather than self-selection into a principal preparation program. The Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) report stressed emphasis on integrating theory and practice as well as internships with hands-on leadership opportunities. Referring to mentorship feature of preparation programs the authors stated that, “relatively few programs have strong clinical components; experiences that allow prospective leaders to learn the many facets of their complex jobs in close collaboration with highly skilled veteran leaders” (p. 5).

Barber (2006) and Orr (2007) saw typical features used by traditional preparation programs as having come under the microscope. They indicated that the quality and depth of internships are “notably uneven” across the programs. According to these two researchers, the field-based internship is a pivotal experience for candidates’ professional learning.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) also addressed whether leadership can be taught. The authors affirmed that the 2007 SELI study found that leadership could be taught in exemplary programs. These exemplary programs were described as including the following program features: standards-based curriculum, field-based internship with skilled supervision, cohort groups, problem-based case studies, proactive recruitment and selection of candidates and

faculty (including university-based instructors and school-based practitioners), and strong partnerships between universities and school divisions.

Davis et al. (2005) found insufficient evidence on whether and how the learning opportunities provided by program features enable future principals to become more effective in their positions. The authors also reported that the preparation of principals lacks a “strong and coherent research base” (p. 12). In their view, programs are experimenting with various combinations of curriculum, methods, and program features hoping to enhance principal preparation.

Program Standards

A review of standards that undergird educational leadership allows for greater breadth of knowledge contributing to the foundation in this field. Standards have been a part of education since it became formalized in higher education in the mid-1800s. Standards have been written and put in place to provide uniform content and delivery.

Standards form a foundation upon which education is built. A 2006 report published by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) described four main sets of standards utilized in the field of education: standards for student learning, standards for teaching, standards for staff development, and standards for instructional leadership.

According to a Wallace (2006) report on Educational Leadership Policy Standards, standards are the foundation for all components of an educational system, including the preparation of new leaders. Standards guide the way for preparing, licensing, as well as screening and hiring leaders.

Standards are defined by Webster as, “something established for use as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging capacity, extent, value, or quality.” Further definitions

include, “ a level of excellence, attainment, regarded as a measure of adequacy,” and “the type, model, or example commonly or generally accepted or adhered to; criterion set for usages or practices” (Webster, 2001, p. 1396). In the field of educational leadership, all three definitions set the stage for standards that are utilized as a foundation for excellence. In preparing principals, standards are developed for use in training, coursework, accreditation, licensure, and assessment.

Standards in educational leadership have been defined as, “the knowledge and skills that should be mastered in order to achieve a level of proficiency in a particular area” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007, p. 20). In the field of education, definitions and three types of standards are presented by the Educational Leadership Policy Standards in the revised 2008 ISLLC Standards. The three major types of standards in education are policy standards, practice standards, and program standards.

Each type of standard is quite different. Policy standards are “high-level, broad national standards that policymakers and states use as a model for developing their own policy standards. Policy standards are typically used for “visioning, policy development, and identifying general goals for education leaders” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007, p. 20). Practice standards are focused upon the roles of student, teacher, and administrator. The practice standards are observable behaviors and required actions. Practice standards are measurable and used as guides to establish individual performance goals and professional development plans (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007). Program standards guide curriculum planning, program design, and implementation (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007). This study subsumes the program and practice standards of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium with the corresponding assessment, the School Leaders Licensure Assessment.

Standards in educational leadership have reflected the different approaches by practitioners and scholars that began in the early 1900s when educational administration became a university-based program of study. The struggle to balance theory and practice in educational leadership continues to persist (Berry & Breach, 2006). Berry and Breach (2006) referred to the 1987 Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, entitled *Leaders for America's Schools*, which outlined recommendations to restructure national requirements for educational leadership in the future. This led the reform movement into the development of standards for educational leaders. Black and Murtadha (2006) described the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as the years that a body of research emerged, from the effective schools movement that guided the development and approach of standards-based frameworks for educational leadership programs and future educational leaders.

In 1994, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, a 1996 program of the Council of Chief State School Officers, began creating model standards for school leaders. The standards were crafted based upon research and collective wisdom of 24 state agencies, policymakers, and representatives. These standards were approved in final form in 1996 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). The standards for instructional leaders provide a framework for effective practice for principals (National Staff Development Council, 2006). In 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education aligned its accreditation standards for educational leadership training programs with the ISLLC standards (Hale & Moorman, 2003) (see Table 1).

Reform in educational leadership continues to be supported by the Southern Regional Education Board. SREB was formed in 1948 by southern governors to help educational and governmental leaders work cooperatively to advance education, and as a result improve the

region's social and economic life (Southern Regional Education Board, 2002). Along with the Wallace Foundation, whose major purpose has been advancing the field of educational leadership, SREB has taken an active role in advancing the field. Both organizations have provided research funding and resources to guide the development of policy standards that raise the bar for pupil achievement by raising the level of academic leadership. As the literature has shown, raising the level of instruction and leadership are the two most critical factors in pupil achievement.

In order to provide standards to their participating states, SREB examined the difference between a certified principal and a qualified principal. In the 16 states SREB serves the school district leaders reported a diminished supply of principals, yet the problem was not the lack of certified principals but rather a lack of qualified principals. SREB reported that all 16 states have ample certified principals. On the other hand, in this study no state was considered to have enough fully qualified principals to lead schools to excellence. As clarified by Bottoms, O'Neil, Fry and Hill (2003), "Certification, as it exists today, is not proof of quality" (p. 2). Standards drive policy and policies define licensure.

The Wallace Foundation has supported a range of efforts aimed to improve student learning and raising the level of excellence of school leaders. The Foundation has supported research and has a national commitment to make every child a successful learner and to place a high-quality leader in every school.

In the 2006 Wallace Policy Report it was stated that, "behind every great school is a great principal" (p. 2). The report recommended a leadership system consisting of three core elements of policy that determine the quality of school leadership: standards, training, and conditions. The

Table 1

Six ISLCC Standards and 11 Job-Analysis Dimensions

ISLCC Standards	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by . . .
Standard 1	Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
Standard 2	Advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3	Ensuring management of the organizations, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.
Standard 4	Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Standard 5	Acting with integrity, with fairness and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6	Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.
Job Dimensions	
1	Leadership.
2	Strategic planning.

Table 1-continued

Job Dimensions-continued	
3	Facilitating student learning.
4	Developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum and instruction.
5	Selecting, supervising and evaluating faculty and staff.
6	Relationships with faculty and support staff.
7	Professional development.
8	Community relations.
9	Management.
10	Maintaining the physical security of students, faculty and support staff.
11	Operations.

Wallace Foundation (2006) recommended “standards that spell out clear expectations about what leaders need to know and do to improve instruction and learning and that form the basis for holding them accountable” (p. 3).

A 2005 SELI report proposed to expand the candidate pool of potential school leaders by redefining entry requirements, introduce competition for training and radically change the terms of employment (Davis et al., 2005). This report did not recommend lowering standards but rather holding school leadership to the highest standards which were stated primarily in terms of school effectiveness. The focus remained upon school leader’s performance and student achievement.

In 2000, policymakers began and continued to support the need to ensure excellence among all principals. Various states began to provide a clear definition of an effective principal, described according to a set of standards, and required principals to be evaluated regularly according to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions defined in the standards (Morrison, 2005).

A 2007 SELI report summarized the role of standards in principal preparation reform by describing new initiatives to prepare school leaders. These initiatives began to flourish across the nation in 2000 (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Some states and districts are aggressively overhauling their systems of preparation for principals and making systemic changes while other states have made marginal changes. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) viewed awareness of promising initiatives as necessary to expand reform, as well as critical to developing future leaders who could sustain school reforms already underway.

The ISLLC Standards were written to raise the bar for the practice of school leadership by establishing common standards for school leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). These standards were created by examining models of leadership, research about the connection between school leadership and productive schools, and by considering trends in

education regarding views of leadership (Council off Chief State School Officers, 1996). The ISLLC Standards have increasingly influenced the design of principal preparation programs, however, the degree to which they have been incorporated into state statues and policies varies (Davis et al., 2005).

The ISLLC Standards were adopted by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education as the standards for accrediting leadership preparation programs, thus significantly enhancing their influence on the education of school leaders (Murphy et al., 2007, p. 17). NCATE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the professional accrediting organization for postsecondary institutions that prepare teachers and administrators. NCATE has partnerships with 48 states to conduct joint reviews of education colleges and universities. In 2002, the NCATE Standards were merged with the ISLLC Standards to yield new Educational Leader Constituent Council (ELCC) standards (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Responding to dramatic changes in education policy research, the ISLLC Standards were revised and approved in December 2007. The focus has changed from whether leadership matters to a focus on how to train, place, and support high-quality leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The revised standards are referred to as ISLLC 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007).

The new ISLLC 2008 Standards were built on the same footprint as the original 1996 ISLLC Standards. The indicators from the 1996 ISLLC Standards have been replaced by “functions” that define each standard and provide measurable leadership behaviors.

Murphy et al. (2007) wrote that standards have influenced the profession of school leadership more than anyone could have anticipated. Murphy (2003) suggested that part of the success of the standards is the appeal of a vision for the field of educational leadership.

Berry and Breach (2006) portrayed the original ISLLC Standards as a “snapshot of an era” that needed to undergo revisions to reflect contemporary thinking. They characterized the 1996 ISLLC Standards as limited in their scope and addressed entry-level skills, abilities, and knowledge. The 1996 ISLLC Standards for educational leadership preparation are geared to the graduate level according to Berry and Breach. These authors viewed 1996 ISLLC Standards as having no grounding in research to validate course content. On the other hand, outside of course content, the authors described the standards as a culmination of many years of effort that provided clarity for planners of educational administration programs and courses.

The CCSSO News bulletin about the revised ISLLC Standards 2008 stated that, “states recognize that schools and districts will not meet demanding requirements for improving achievement without effective leaders” (2008, p. 1). The ISLLC Standards have guided leadership policy and practice in 43 states since their first release in 1996 (Murphy et al., 2007). Nationally, universities and school district-based principal preparation programs have developed leadership curriculum based upon the 1996 ISLLC Standards. States and policymakers recognize that educational leadership is more important than ever (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

The acceptance of alternative licensure for teachers has paved the way for a similar movement for administrators. The national shortage of qualified and certified teachers and administrators has led to current initiatives which de-emphasize traditional certification routes.

Since 2005 requirements for administrative licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia has included holding a master’s degree from an accredited university, 3 years of full-time teaching experience in an accredited school, completion of an approved administration program

with specified competencies including an internship and a passing score of 165 of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (Virginia Department of Education, 2007).

There are 38 universities in Virginia providing educational administration coursework for endorsement and 15 universities with departments of Educational Leadership. Many of these universities are currently in partnerships with various school divisions to prepare future principals (Virginia Department of Education, 2007).

The administration and supervision programs offered by public universities in Virginia were required to align with NCATE's adoption of 1996 ISLLC Standards beginning in the fall of 2005. Both prior to and after the fall of 2005, the Virginia Department of Education Licensure Regulations for Administration and Supervision specified courses of study that included student growth and development topics (learning and motivational theories, curriculum design, implementation and evaluation, instructional methodology, diversity and technology); systems and organizations (change process, strategic plans, data collection and analyses, and communication); organizational development (school operations, safety, human resources, fiscal operations, and management); and conditions of the diverse school community (resources, trends and partnerships); the purpose of education including philosophy, history and ethics, and school law (Virginia Department of Education Licensure Regulations, Section VI, 8 VAC 20-21-580, 2007).

In Virginia, the Department of Education is promoting the advancement of leadership preparation programs through various initiatives. The former Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary stated, "Leadership is essential to raising the achievement of students. In every successful school you will find a principal who understands how children

learn, insists on best practices and effective instruction, and knows how to organize, lead, and inspire teachers” (Virginia Department of Education, 2004, p. 1).

This overview of educational leadership standards that undergird principal preparation programs is important to this dissertation. As indicated in this review of literature, standards drive instruction as well as impact elements/features used in principal preparation programs.

Need for This Study

The need for research on what works in principal preparation programs is apparent throughout this review of literature. Lashway (2003) said there was a “smattering” of studies evaluating different dimensions of leadership programs, but nothing that would permit any conclusions about their overall effectiveness. Professional literature indicates that “research is scant” and that, “nothing would permit any conclusions about effectiveness of principal preparation programs” (Lashway, 2003, p. 3).

Murphy et al. (2007) found no research studies of reform in preparation programs in school leadership available. This is not surprising because there is negligible literature surrounding preparation reform work in general. These authors stated that a, “handful of studies have experiential scope and depth of principal preparation reform over the past fifteen years” (p. 9). Lashway (2003) quoted Wildman’s 2001 comprehensive review of the literature; Wildman reached the, “inescapable conclusions. . .that there isn’t much research and that no studies evaluating different dimensions of leadership programs permitted any conclusions about their overall effectiveness” (Lashway, 2003, p. 1).

According to multiple surveys and qualitative studies, emerging/new principals themselves say they are not fully equipped for the job (Hess & Kelly, 2005a). Critics have argued that principal preparation programs have not undergone self-evaluation to examine their

effectiveness; furthermore, surveys and interviews of principals have indicated that principal preparation programs do not prepare principals sufficiently for the myriad demands of the job (Black & Murtafda, 2006).

Preparation programs have little evidence from which to respond to questions about program accountability and effectiveness (Black & Murtafda, 2006). There is also insufficient research that connects preparation practices to principals' performance in schools and the impact it has on student achievement. Referring to Browne-Ferrigno, Barnett, and Muth's (2002) conclusions and recommendations about reformation of principal preparation, Lashway (2003) stated, "It may be that the crucial missing link in reform efforts is research that would begin to make those connections" (p. 3).

Despite ongoing debates, conferences, and the few qualitative studies regarding principal and teacher perceptions of principal preparation programs, there have been no quantitative studies in the literature that connect principal preparation programs with measures of on-the-job effectiveness (Black & Murtafda, 2006). The literature is consistent in concluding that the body of research on principal preparation is very limited (Hess & Kelly, 2005a; Lashway, 2003). Murphy et al. (2007) stated, "Just as society now asks more of its schools, we must ask more of our preparation programs" (p. 34).

With his analysis of over 2,000 reports and journal articles on preparing school leaders from 1979 through 2002, Murphy (2003) supported the need for more research on the preparation of principals. Murphy found that less than 3% of the publications he analyzed were empirical studies.

Levine's (2005) conclusion regarding educational administration preparation was that no one agrees on: who should be admitted to principal preparation programs; what they should

prepare their students to do; what they should teach; whom they should hire to teach aspiring principals; what degrees they should offer; or how to balance theoretical and practical instruction.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) concluded that existing knowledge on the best ways to develop effective leaders is insufficient. Lashway (2003) and Murphy (2003) both believe that academic knowledge alone becomes self-defeating. The professors and ultimately the students must create a “bridge between theory and practice. Too often it turns out to be a bridge to nowhere” (Lashway, p. 2).

As Murphy et al. (2007) concluded, over the last 25 years professors and building-level educators have continuously sought to understand how school improvement can best be made. In essence, their review of whole state reform initiatives found “strong leadership” to undergird high performing schools.

It is known that school leadership is the key to school improvement and that the skill and knowledge of principals are critical (Hess & Kelly, 2005a). Also supporting the need for this study is clarity about the crucial role principals play in raising achievement.

Other researchers (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; Murphy et al., 2007) concluded that principals are the key to making a difference in creating effective schools. Researchers, policymakers, and educational practitioners are in agreement that good school principals are the critical element in good schools. Effective principal leadership is mandatory in order to raise pupil achievement in schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001).

Another important aspect is certification. Davis et al. (2005) focused on the aspect of being fully qualified and concluded that too many graduates will be certified but not fully

qualified to effectively lead school improvements. The major consideration regarding qualification relates to societal changes that require a vastly different preparation to meet pupil-teacher needs.

Davis et al. (2005) believe that more research is desperately needed in order to provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of preparation programs so there is clarity on how to improve these programs. A clearer picture is needed regarding specific features/elements and other aspects of principal preparation programs that influence new principals so they improve pupil learning. The Wallace Foundation (2006) also indicated that additional research is necessary to determine the impact and relative importance of leadership in key areas to determine effectiveness.

According to Fiore (2002), there are “gaps and barriers” between the ISLLC Standards and filling the principal positions with fully qualified school leaders. These gaps include school district partnership in the preparation of school leaders, reformation of licensure programs, and integral professional development for school leaders.

The preparation of future school principals is of utmost importance because highly qualified school leaders are needed in our nation’s schools if we are to raise achievement levels of pupils. Strong leaders are needed to fulfill the goals of successful schools.

Definition of Terms

Principal. The “instructional leader of the school who is responsible for effective school management that promotes positive student achievement, a safe and secure environment in which to teach and learn, and use efficient use of resources” (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, HJR No.147, 2005, p. 17).

School leader. In this study, the term “school leader” refers to the principal and emerging school leaders refers to aspiring candidates for the principalship.

School division. A political subdivision that is associated with one or more counties, independent cities, and incorporated towns in Virginia.

Elements: Program features used in principal preparation. Examples include tapping, mentorship, learning focus and individual focus program requirements.

Interview during application. An interview conducted with participation by school division personnel.

Mentor focus. A program element that pairs emerging school leaders with experienced principals for the purpose of guidance and mentorship.

Portfolio project. A project that is assigned to demonstrate competency while also providing benefit to the school division. Project focuses on current school in which each candidate works.

Career coaching. Career planning, interview and resume preparation, and guidance provided by personnel within the school division, particularly by the assigned mentor.

Position priority. School-based program participants have priority consideration for vacant principal positions upon program completion or thereafter if no principal position is available immediately.

Time guarantee to work. School-based program participants agree to work for the school division for a pre-determined amount of time after completion of the principal preparation program.

Individual program plans. Programs that are tailored by school division personnel and meet the needs of each participant. One example includes specific course modules for individuals who have not had prior coursework or experience in each particular module.

Pre and posttests. Individual assessments given to school-based program participants by school division personnel in order to ascertain needs as well as strengths and weaknesses for either developing an individual plan or checking for further preparation needs prior to completion of the program.

Highly qualified. Fully prepared and licensed by the Department of Education in Virginia to successfully lead today's schools so that achievement of pupils is improved and school accreditation standards are met annually.

Strong leadership. A school leader who demonstrates the capability to lead schools into high achievement along with positive morale within the school community.

School-based principal preparation. School division personnel actively participate in the preparation of emerging school leaders; varies in degree of local versus university involvement.

University-based principal preparation. Universities conduct the preparation of emerging leaders; are traditional principal preparation programs.

Themes. Analyses of the three phases/data sets revealing key terms used three or more times by different subjects or three or more times by one subject are considered themes.

Goals. Desired outcomes.

Program content. Subject matter of the principal preparation programs.

Processes. How content is delivered to participants in the programs; includes program delivery and program elements.

Program delivery. Instructional methods for preparation in all content areas (e.g., technology based, group assignments).

Outcomes. Results of the principal preparation programs as perceived by program directors and program completers.

Component. Three groups of program elements that identify focus of elements: personal interactive component, individual-centered component, contractual component.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

Methods and Rationale

This mixed methods case study of 10 district-based principal preparation programs included document analyses of program proposals, qualitative analyses of in-depth interviews with program directors, and quantitative as well as qualitative analyses of web-based surveys by program completers. A case study approach was selected to better understand processes (i.e., delivery and elements) as well as goals and outcomes, and content areas of the ten program initiatives. Program directors' and completers' perceptions about the preparation programs were probed. Case studies allow for in-depth examination of "persons, decisions, programs, or other entities that have a unique characteristic of interest" (O'Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2003, p. 39). Case studies are also used to examine details about how something happened. The case study method fit the research questions in this study in attempting to portray the implementers' and participants' perceptions of the overall program including goals, content area, processes (delivery, elements) and outcomes.

The strength of the case study approach is in obtaining information from multiple sources likely to yield rich details. The sources of data for this study included document analysis (i.e., proposals), in-depth interviews with program directors from 9 of the 10 programs, and participant observations and perceptions gleaned from an on-line survey that included open-ended questions.

Documentation of artifacts with content analysis was initially planned as a fourth phase. This did not materialize because only three program directors provided documents, and each document was different in terms of type and usefulness. With each program's artifacts being different, there was no possibility for contrast or comparison. Interviews with program directors allowed for thematic analysis and culling each director's perception of the goals, content, processes (i.e., delivery, elements) and outcomes of their principal preparation program. A web-based survey of program completers captured input valuable to those who prepare emerging school leaders. To be able to survey program completers email addresses were obtained from program directors. Qualitative and quantitative data from survey responses were analyzed to explore perceptions and experiences of completers from the principal preparation programs.

Background

The goal of each of the 10 district-based programs was to prepare program participants for licensure as a principal in Virginia. The processes (i.e., delivery and elements) varied across the 10 state-funded programs.

In 2002, the Virginia General Assembly established a 2-year, 21 member commission to "review, study, and reform educational leadership" (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2005, p. 2). The commission's study was supported by one of 15 national grants from the Wallace Reader's Digest Funds. Referred to as State Actions for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP), in 2002 one of the grants was awarded to the Commonwealth of Virginia and implemented in partnership with the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) at Virginia Commonwealth University. Each of the 15 3-year SAELP grants were awarded \$250,000 to support research and policy development to assist in the preparation of principals and superintendents (Commission for the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2005). The commission's

study laid the foundation for the General Assembly to appropriate funds for the principal preparation programs in this study.

Leaders in the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) selected the 10 programs to be funded and were responsible for verifying that each proposal met the guidelines. As well, VDOE personnel provided implementation assistance and feedback from program evaluation after each cohort's program ended. The Superintendent for Public Instruction designated an experienced School Leadership Specialist from its staff, later titled the Director of Professional Practice, to provide this assistance. From 2004-2006 each of the 10 programs received \$100,000 of a total annual grant award of \$1,000,000.

In 2004 appropriation for General Education by the Virginia General Assembly included \$500,000 for each of two fiscal years in the 2-year General Assembly funding cycle. The funds provided competitive grants of \$100,000 each to school divisions that had a partnership agreement with a university or other entity in Virginia for a "defined leadership development preparation program that addresses the leadership standards established by the Board of Education" (Virginia Department of Education, 2004a). The Virginia General Assembly appropriated funds for leadership grants with five competitive grants of \$100,000 each that were awarded for a 2-year cycle each year. Each program therefore received \$50,000 annually. This dissertation focuses upon the first 2 years of the 4-year grant period, including only the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 grant cycles. Approximately 318 participants were prepared through the first 2 years of state-funded district-based principal preparation programs.

In each of the two school years from 2004 to 2006 there were five different preparation programs with collaborative groupings of neighboring school divisions combining resources and

partnering with a university or other entity to prepare emerging principals for positions within their respective school divisions.

Selection of Sites

A brief description of each of the 10 preparation programs is provided in Appendix A, Description of School-based Principal Programs. These programs differed from one another regarding degree and type of involvement made by school-division personnel during the selection and implementation processes. Program delivery and elements used to prepare emergent principals helped form a definition of school-based principal preparation programs in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Education term for the preparation programs was “innovative” principal preparation programs. All of the programs were based on ISLLC Standards and led to licensure in Administration and Supervision, the Virginia requirement to be hired as a principal.

The case sites for this study were comprised of 10 collaborative groupings of school divisions and one or more university in Virginia or other entity in Virginia. These 10 programs, referred to as School Leadership Development Grants, included Year I (2004-2005) and Year II (2005-2006). The programs took between 12 and 24 months for completion of the program.

Data Collection

This mixed methods case study of 10 district-based preparation programs included: analyses of each proposals documentation of written goals; director perceptions of content, processes (i.e., delivery, elements), and outcomes; qualitative analyses of in-depth interviews of the program directors; and quantitative and qualitative analyses of web-based surveys by program completers. A thorough data collection was initially planned in four phases; only three

phases could be used. The fourth phase was eliminated due to scarcity of artifacts and inconsistency across the few artifacts provided by 3 of the 10 program directors.

Phase I: Content Analysis of Proposals

Phase I for data collection entailed an analysis of each of the 10 proposals and the development of interview questions for the program directors. The goals, content, processes (i.e., delivery, elements), and outcomes were examined and coded for themes.

Phase II: Program Director Interviews

Phase II for data collection involved in-depth, taped phone interviews with the 10 program directors. It is important to ascertain perceptions of directors regarding goals, content, processes (i.e., delivery, elements), and outcomes. An advance letter was mailed to each program director requesting permission to interview them regarding the principal preparation program they directed. A description of the study, purpose, and the waiver of consent to an audio taped interview as well as inclusion of information that would be verbally reviewed during the interview accompanied the letter of request. The letter included the request that program directors provide email addresses of available program completers. Once scheduled, all interviews were conducted by phone. Names remained confidential, anonymity was protected and program directors were not identified. Pseudonyms and findings discussed in the aggregate protected confidentiality. These interviews allowed me to gather relevant information related to the goals, content areas, processes (i.e., delivery, elements) and outcomes of the district-based principal preparation programs. Identical interview questions were posed to each program director (see Appendix B for interview questions). These questions were provided with the advance letter so they could be better prepared to respond.

Seven to 10 days after mailing the letter of request for an interview, I made a follow-up phone call to program directors to schedule an interview at their convenience. Eight of the 10 program directors participated in a taped phone interview and waived consent (i.e., to be interviewed, audio taped, and included in written description of published research) given verbally on tape preceding the beginning of the interview. The ninth director, Program Director J, declined to participate citing both impending retirement planned for June 30, 2010, and loss of principal preparation program documents and electronic data during an office transition. A university partner was recommended as suitable to substitute for the retiring program director. The pseudonym J2 was assigned for clarity of description. The same background information was conveyed, thus representation was provided for this program.

The tenth program director (Director A) initially agreed to be interviewed after schools had closed for the summer; the school division research department intervened to require submission of a formal application to conduct research in their school division. I promptly submitted the application to conduct research and was informed that a decision would be determined within 6 weeks. I did not hear a response from them despite follow-up calls and email contacts. After data collection and data analyses were completed, Program Director A's school division informed me that my request was denied because the study "does not hold the prospect of direct benefit for our school division." That is why only 9 of the 10 programs have input from program directors and program completers.

With one substitute for a program director and one not given school division permission to participate, the final sample to be interviewed included program directors for 9 of the 10 district-based principal preparation programs. All interviews were digitally recorded with advance permission and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist who signed a

confidentiality agreement. Interviews were printed for use in data analysis and verified for accuracy by comparing random samples of audio tapes with printed transcriptions. As indicated to the Institutional Review Board at VCU, all interviews, transcriptions, and data for this study have been maintained in a locked file cabinet in a security-protected home office; electronic data have been protected and password encrypted. All data will be destroyed within 6 months of this dissertation defense and approval.

Upon the conclusion of the interview with each program director, I reminded them of my written request for email addresses of participants who successfully completed the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 preparation programs. To be deemed a program completer required passing the SLLA (with a score of 165 or above) and obtaining licensure as an administrator in Virginia. The program director was informed that email addresses would be used to email a web-based survey which allowed me to probe program completers about their experiences during the principal preparation program as well as their perceptions. Six directors provided email addresses of available program completers; two directors preferred to forward the survey request and waiver of consent; one director did not provide email addresses or forward the request and one program's school division declined participation in the study. Thus, eight programs are represented by program participants who responded to the survey.

Phase III: Survey of Program Completers

Another way to probe the perception of program effectiveness and success was to survey program participants. Phase III for data collection involved a web-based survey of program completers that was based upon analysis of the program proposals. Sample size for program completers was dependent upon availability of current, accurate email addresses and response rate of program completers. Advantages to using web-based survey research include accuracy

and response speed. See Appendix C for the demographic items that preceded survey questions that were developed after reviewing the grant proposals.

Survey Procedures. As has already been made clear, I had asked program directors to provide me with email addresses of available program completers from 2004-2006 so that I could request anonymous participation in a web-based survey to explore personal perceptions of their preparation programs. Although I requested program directors provide me email addresses of 2004-2006 program completers, only six program directors provided email addresses enabling me to directly solicit participation in the web-based survey of program completers. Each director provided between 11 and 180 email contacts. The request to participate in an anonymous survey and the link to the survey was initially sent to the email addresses provided by the six program directors. Many email addresses were returned with an error message as “undeliverable.” Due to the programs having been implemented between 4 and 6 years ago, many email addresses were no longer accurate. Because two program directors forwarded the request for survey respondents rather than providing the email addresses to me, the total number of program completers contacted cannot be obtained. I sent 327 email requests to participate in the survey, received 93 error messages, and 75 of the respondents completed the web-based survey. The survey responses represented 32% of the 234 email requests that did not bounce back.

It is impossible to establish a definite number of program completers for various reasons. Not having asked each director I interviewed for an accurate count of program completers, the next best option was to use projections for number of participants in their programs that was provided in the proposals for funding. Each principal preparation program was funded by the state for 2 years, but various programs were planned for 12, 18 or 24 months duration. Each program proposal stated a maximum number of program participants; these ranged from 12 to 50

across the 10 proposals. It was not clear from proposals with 12-month programs if the number of participants were included on an annual basis or over the 2-year grant funding cycle.

The maximum number of participants did not match the number of email addresses requested by me and provided by program directors. An estimate of the maximum number of participants for all 10 programs was 318 participants; this does not include the possibility of more participants in a second year in the three programs completed in 12 months. Additionally, program directors provided 327 email addresses, an increase of nine addresses above the estimated 318 total participants. This may be explained, in part, by one director's involvement in two programs as well as the possible addition of email addresses that belonged to program implementers in addition to the list of program completers.

Some directors provided few email addresses as compared to the number of maximum participants projected in the respective program proposal. One example was a director who provided 11 email addresses and the program proposal estimated there would be a maximum of 50 participants. For these reasons, it is impossible to determine an accurate number of program completers. This affects the accuracy of figures provided for "rate of response" to the survey.

Survey results are reported by frequency and percent of responses received. Percentages were calculated by the total number of respondents for each question. Survey participants did not respond to every question; there was a range of 66 to 75 responses from program participants per question.

The web-based survey included eight demographic questions. These included: gender, age range, race, preparation program completed, job title during the preparation program, current job title, endorsement areas, and principal position attainment. Five questions addressed career changes and promotions, followed by questions regarding elements. Open-ended questions

included perceptions of valuable program aspects and improvement suggestions for future programs.

Anticipating learning more about intent, delivery and evaluation of the 10 programs, a fourth phase was planned to gather artifacts other than the proposals for funding. Course materials, curriculum descriptions, and program evaluation as well as anything else deemed helpful by program directors could have been submitted. Only three program directors provided artifacts and the number of documents was limited. The types of artifacts presented by the three directors were very different in nature and scope. Analyses would be of no use and the phase was eliminated from the research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted via thematic analyses of grant proposals as well as interviews with program directors. Survey responses of program completers allowed for qualitative analysis of open-ended responses and quantitative analyses of demographics, professional endorsements, and record of employment. Interviews were recorded with permission of each program director. These recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D). The transcribed interviews were coded according to themes and analyzed. Table 2 delineates the data collection and analyses for each research question.

Researcher Perspective

Throughout my adult life I have had a fascination with leadership. I have often wondered whether strong leadership is owed solely to inborn characteristics or whether it could be developed. If leaders can be developed, I have wondered about the best ways to reach this goal as well as what program features increase the likelihood of goal attainment. Having worked as

Table 2

Research Questions, Data Collection and Data Analysis

Research Question	Data Collection	Data Analysis
What did the implementers of the district school-based principal preparation programs plan to accomplish?	Documentation of grant proposals. Interviews with program directors.	Digital recordings of interviews were transcribed. Qualitative analysis Thematic analysis and content analysis.
What were the outcomes of the school district-based principal preparation programs?	Interviews with program directors. Obtain email addresses of program completers from program directors. Web-based survey of available program completers.	Qualitative analysis of transcribed interviews for themes and terms. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of open-ended survey responses. Quantitative analysis; descriptive statistics.
How were the elements used in principal preparation programs perceived by program directors and by program completers?	Interviews with program directors. Survey responses from program completers.	Thematic analysis. Content analysis. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of transcribed interviews and survey responses.

a teacher and then as an assistant principal with various leaders, my interest evolved into this study. Having observed the critical impact of strong leadership in a school community resulted in my abiding interest in knowing what is keyed to preparation of principals who are able to lead schools to goal achievement. I see nothing in my background or interests that would interfere with my objectivity in studying principal preparation programs. I continue to hold a neutral approach to the findings.

Application to Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at VCU is the governing organization responsible for reviewing all research that involves human subjects to protect them and ensure adherence to all laws and regulations. The IRB must examine and approve all research proposals before data collection may begin.

I applied for Expedited Status when submitting the application to IRB. This study meets the criteria for expedited status under the IRB Sec. 5 CFR 46.101(b) by not involving more than minimal risk to human subjects. This research is conducted in “established or commonly accepted educational settings involving normal educational practices” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2008, p. 3) and also with “the collection or study of existing data in publicly available data” along with “information recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2008, p. 3).

In adherence to IRB policies and practices to protect human subjects in research studies at VCU, the IRB research flow charts were examined and met all criteria for exempt status. The web-based survey invited, rather than required, participation and responses remained anonymous; no names or identifying information were revealed. Program directors waived

consent to a taped interview, gave oral consent for the taped interview at the beginning of the taped interview, as well as consent to the information and findings being available via Dissertation Abstracts and elsewhere (Appendix E). Further guaranteeing total anonymity, program directors were not identified. Furthermore, the transcriber of the taped interviews signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D).

Limitations

Generalizability

All studies have their limitations and the findings from this study have typical and study specific limitations. The most obvious limitation is generalizability. This study only focused upon 10 grant-funded, school district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia in 2004-2006. The programs represented 53 school divisions across Virginia and three universities. Although all 10 grant proposals were analyzed, only nine program directors agreed to participate in interviews; thus one program was missing representation by the program director and all program completers in that school division. Care should be taken when generalizing findings from this study to other contexts. The perceptions of participants in this study may or may not be congruent with other program directors and program completers. Prior experience, years of teaching and administrative experience, and professional development may be limitations.

Nine of the 10 program directors, from whom permission to conduct the study was requested, consented to an interview. The nine program directors who responded represented 50 of the 53 school divisions that participated in the grant-funded partnerships. The 50 school divisions represented are fewer than half of the school divisions in Virginia. According to the Virginia Department of Education web site, there are 143 school divisions and, therefore, 93 school divisions were not participants in the grant-funded programs. Seven of the 8 Virginia

Department of Education regions were represented in the grant-funded, school district-based principal preparation programs in 2004-2006. It is not appropriate to generalize findings beyond the participating school divisions and universities in this study; however, the findings of this study could be informative to other programs finding similarities with the demographics of this study. Attempts to positively verify the representativeness of the sample across Virginia or beyond were unsuccessful because population demographic of seven regions vary; however, the researcher believes the sample is reasonably representative of the overall state population from which it came because it includes rural, suburban, and urban school systems.

The ability to generalize to other groups, such as other universities and other program completers from other principal preparation programs, poses challenges as it relates to certain variables in the study. There could likely be differences between program completers as well as between university educational leadership programs. Perceptions of different participants and program implementers may differ as they relate to program goals, program content, program processes and program outcomes. On the other hand, the content of principal preparation programs must adhere to licensure regulations stipulated by the Virginia Department of Education.

Nonresponse Error

Nonresponse error can occur when respondents to a survey have different characteristics from those who do not respond and when a significant number of people in the survey sample do or do not respond. Although there was a respectable response rate of 32%, 68% of the program completers whose email addresses were provided and were invited to participate chose not to respond to the Web-based survey for undeterminable reasons.

The number of survey respondents and corresponding response percentages may not have represented the entire population of program completers. This may be due, in part, to no representation of program completers from two grant-funded programs and a wide disparity (between 3 and 34) in the number of responses from each of the eight programs that were represented. The number of program completers who participated in this study is a small representation related to the projected number of program completers. According to the proposals, 636 total program participants were estimated for inclusion in the grant programs for 2004-2006; 75 survey respondents represent approximately 12% of program completers. Four to 5 years have elapsed since the conclusion of the principal preparation programs in this study and may have been a limiting variable in locating accurate email addresses.

Program completers may have chosen not to participate because the survey would have taken 10 to 15 minutes to complete via the Web. As indicated by survey responses, most program completers were working as teachers or administrators who were closing the school year and may have been pressed to take care of daily working responsibilities rather than take time out of busy schedules to complete the survey. Due to the timing of the study, perhaps some program completers did not check their work email for various reasons. If the program completers who did not respond had stronger perceptions positively or negatively, the fact they chose not to respond may have resulted in respondents' levels of perception of being too low or too high.

Even though there are advantages to using the Internet to conduct survey research, disadvantages such as discomfort about anonymity and confidentiality may have contributed to nonresponse error. Program completers who may not feel certain they could not be identified may have elected not to participate in the survey which could skew the results. Many people

have concerns regarding security of information provided via the Internet including concerns that responses can be traced back to them. Encryption technology has improved over the years and Survey Monkey ensured security which has been approved for research at VCU and MCV. It was hoped that the voluntary nature and security of the survey responses would bring a sense of assurance and establish the trust necessary to encourage participation by program completers. I believe that the possibility of nonresponse bias is mitigated by these factors.

Program directors that chose to participate may have had concerns about expressing positive or negative perceptions. They may not have wanted to imply any perceived weaknesses regarding their respective programs due to loyalty they may feel to their school division and/or university. If program directors failed to answer truthfully, the results could be skewed to reflect a more positive or negative outcome. All 10 program directors initially agreed to an interview and one school division declined based upon research approval requirements. I provided the required research approval application packet but did not hear a response from the school division.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents data, analysis of qualitative findings, and results of quantitative statistical analyses regarding goals and program directors' and completers' perceptions about the 10 district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia from 2004-2006. This case study implements three of four phases that had been planned for collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The mixed methods allowed for exploratory and formative analyses. I held no preconceived expectations about program content or processes employed for program delivery.

As described in chapter 3, the initial phase of data collection involved content analysis of the proposals to determine the intended goals and delivery processes planned for each of the 10 programs. The second phase of data collection included semi structured, tape-recorded phone interviews with the program directors that were transcribed verbatim. All transcriptions were verified for accuracy, coded, then analyzed for themes and identified supplemental findings. In this second phase, focused interviews with program directors consisted of a specific set of open-ended questions that encouraged a wider exploration of facts, opinions, and insights (Yin, 2003). Field notes supported the transcripts and were also coded for content and themes. The third phase of data collection was an anonymous, web-based survey of available program completers. The data from this third phase led to analyses of quantitative data as well as

qualitative data from open-ended survey questions. The small sample size and anonymity of responses did not lend itself to further statistical analyses (e.g., gender, age, race, endorsements, job position). Triangulation involves at least three data sources to explore analyses from more than one perspective so that findings may be cross validated. Triangulation helps establish validity of a study and serves as an integrity check for the inferences drawn by the researcher (Schwandt, 2001). All three phases of data analysis were triangulated to identify key themes and perceptions of the 10 principal preparation programs. Triangulation of qualitative data allowed for analysis of perceptions and processes as well as possible links among goals, content, and outcomes. The first part of this chapter provides a description of the 10 proposals, 9 of the 10 program directors and describes the convenience sample of available program completers. This is followed by findings that shed some light on the perceptions of respondents regarding goals and outcomes of each respective program. Respondents include nine of the 10 program directors and available program completers. The sections that follow include qualitative findings and results of statistical analyses of quantitative data, and analyses organized by phases of data analysis, and followed by a summary of the chapter.

Description of Sites, Data Sets, and Subjects

The first phase of data collection involved analysis of 10 school district-based principal preparation program proposals. The Requests for Proposals were a culmination of 3 years of study by the General Assembly and personnel representing the Department of Education that resulted in 10 funded grants. Tracing this history of this endeavor began in 2002 when a Wallace Foundation grant funded the creation of the Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership. The commission was established to evaluate Virginia's educational leadership policy and practice, propose needed reform, and communicate findings to the Board

of Education. The commission studied issues surrounding the preparation of principals. After 2 years of meetings involving discussions and analysis, the commission was disbanded. The Task Force to Evaluate and Redesign Preparation Programs and Professional Development for School Leaders in 2004 was formed to carry out the work of the commission. This task force presented 12 recommendations for reform of educational leadership in Virginia. The recommendations included a call for school divisions, universities, and professional organizations to work together to establish principal preparation programs to fully prepare school leaders. The programs they planned and implemented provide the data sets/subjects for this dissertation.

The subjects were comprised of program directors whose names and contact information were listed on the cover of each proposal. In several cases the person submitting the proposal referred to oneself as “program manager,” “program director,” “contact person,” or other similar titles (e.g., program representative). Three proposals for funding had listed the directors’ full-time position title (e.g., Assistant Superintendent) rather than title specific to the proposal for funding. For the purposes of this study, the contact name of the person(s) submitting the proposal was considered to be the program director. To protect confidentiality, I randomly assigned pseudonyms using letters of the alphabet (e.g., Program Director A, Program Director B) to the nine program directors. To further protect identities or program affiliation, findings from interviews with program directors will be reported in the aggregate.

The third phase of this study involved a confidential web-based survey of available program completers. I requested that program directors provide email addresses of available program completers; these were provided by six program directors. Directors C, E, G, H, and F provided email addresses promptly; Director B provided email addresses after multiple requests. Program Directors D and J2 preferred to forward the request for participation in the survey; it is

not possible to determine how many program completers Directors D and J2 attempted to locate via email. Two program directors did not provide email addresses for any program completers and therefore do not have survey respondents. Of the 10 program directors contacted, 8 of the 10 indicated enthusiasm and willingness to participate in any possible manner. When program artifacts were requested at the conclusion of the interview, Directors C, E and D indicated they could email program artifacts and gather additional data for this study.

Due to email addresses that dated back to 2004, multiple emails bounced back with an error message “undeliverable.” I sent email requests for survey participation to all 327 email addresses provided; 93 emails were returned as no longer available. Email addresses of program completers that appeared accurate, as evidenced by no returned error message, were prompted to respond one additional time approximately 10 days after the initial email that requested their participation in the study. Since the time frame of this study, 2004-2006, many variables may explain expired email addresses including job and location changes as well as changes in personal email addresses. Because two program directors forwarded my email request to program completers, I cannot determine how many of their program completers were invited to participate in the survey. Seventy-five program completers responded to the on-line survey. After a third email request for survey responses and no further responses were returned, the survey was closed. The 75 survey responses comprise a 32% response rate by program completers with accurate email addresses who received the survey link directly from this researcher; the two programs not contacted directly by me cannot be included in the response rate.

The following sections present findings from qualitative data for each phase of data collection and results of statistical analysis of quantitative data. An analysis of findings and results for research questions and a summary will conclude this chapter.

Phase I: Analysis of Proposals

A copy of each funded programs submitted for 2004 and 2005 was provided by the Director of Professional Practice from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The copy of each proposal included the goals and intent, and planning and delivery methods. Budget information was not included for any proposal and was not needed for this study. Each of the 10 proposals described a curriculum aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) and congruence with the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel as well as with Virginia's Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents. There were no quality controls or other specific directives by the Virginia Department of Education. At the conclusion of the grant cycle, program directors provided summative reports to the Virginia Department of Education. There were no formal assessments of the programs. This study focused on goals, content, processes, and outcomes of the district-based principal preparation programs. In other words, what did they intend to accomplish and what were the outcomes of the programs?

As described in chapter 1, other than adherence to the mentioned standards and regulations and a partnership with one or more universities or other entity, the program proposals were open for creative, innovative approaches to preparing emerging principals. There were no formal assessments of the programs by the Virginia Department of Education. This study focused on program evaluation of the school district-based principal preparation programs in terms of perceptions held by both program directors and completers. The proposals provided

information about the intent of each program and helped in developing questions related to outcomes.

The 10 proposals were read multiple times and then coded for themes. When a key term was voiced or used three times, it was considered to be a theme. A theme is also defined when it is written in three or more proposals or included three or more times within one proposal.

As described in chapter 3 and the introduction of this chapter 4, the first phase of data collection and data analysis was a thorough thematic analysis of all 10 proposals that were submitted to and approved by the Virginia Department of Education. This exploratory analysis took place through multiple readings and codings to extract and synthesize common themes. Terms (e.g., practitioner-oriented, mentor) were highlighted, color coded, compared and contrasted, along with frequency of terms. Terms and notes were written in the margins of each proposal and then rewritten in column form per program resulting in 10 final columns of extracted data including terms that lead to the identification of themes. The columns were analyzed for common terms to identify themes and anything considered noteworthy. Notes, highlights, terms, and identified themes were compared and contrasted across programs via handwritten and typed matrices that resulted in tables for analysis included in this chapter (see Table 2 through Table 23).

Another process of reading and analysis of the proposals consisted of examining goals and intents of each proposed school district-based principal preparation program. See Table 3, Thematic Analysis of Proposals, for a bulleted analysis of major goals, key processes, and a yes/no response to whether the program is still operating. The programs were numbered randomly for organization of data analyses and are not identified by program name or description. The type and degree of involvement by school division personnel appeared to fall in

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of Grant Proposals

Program No.	Major Goals	Key Processes	Still Operating?
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop best practices model of alternative licensure. -Increase number of highly qualified administrative applicants. -Need fully prepared, highly qualified personnel to fill 50% administrative vacancies in 3-5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Distance learning; online, interactive using WebCT, BlackBoard. -NASSP pretests. -Individual PEP plans. -Training modules 4-7. -Rigorous selection process. -No college courses. -Workshops. 	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shifted to university-led with school division support determined by individual divisions. -Alternate program implemented by university grant partner.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to replace 40% of administrators within 8 years. -Ensure continuity of leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recruit and select. -Interview with university admission rubric. -Preassessment. -Courses through university onsite in school division. -Release time for internship. -Mentor team. -Externship with business leaders. Leadership Institute Training. 	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When grant funding ended, the alternate partnership ended.

Table 3-continued

Program No.	Major Goals	Key Processes	Still Operating?
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to replace 77-113 leadership positions by 2009. -School division began leadership development in 2001. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tapped candidate and served as mentor. -Interviews and central office panel determines. -Partnership with retired superintendent's educational leadership training foundation. -Evaluated by local university. -Coaching, shadowing, action project, authentic school and division initiatives. 	<p>No</p> <p>-Unknown reasons by school division. Ongoing leadership development continuum proposed.</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Program director is retiring 6/30/09. -Records in hard-copy and computer lost in relocation of the program director's office. -Interviewed university faculty member 6/28/10. -Practical orientation for leadership development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Two separate, distinct leadership partnerships. -First traditional; second innovative. -Presenters from the field (State Police for safety). -Win-win for university and rural school divisions. -Three university and 8 school divisions shared responsibilities. 	<p>No</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School division required additional research packet application; declined to participate in this study. 	<p>Not involved in study</p>	<p>Unknown</p>

Table 3-continued

Program No.	Major Goals	Key Processes	Still Operating?
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multiple school divisions need to prepare 50 highly qualified candidates for anticipated vacancies. -By 2009, 20%-79% of school division administrators may retire. -By 2014, 40%-90% of administrators may retire. -Decline in number and quality of applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teams of practitioners. -Units of study based on ISLLC Standards. -Mentorship. -Practical experiences, case studies. -Portfolios. -Individual program plans. -Second grant year had conventional course work. 	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -University partner is currently evaluating future program plans.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Traditional educational leadership programs are not preparing leaders who are equipped to lead challenging urban schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Flexible, modular, individualized. -Self-selection initially followed by interview, portfolio, in-basket activity. -Must meet university admission requirements. -Career planning and counseling. -Mentor through first year on the job. -Priority hiring. 	<p>Somewhat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -University partner implements program; school divisions contribute partial tuition (30%).
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Historical assessment of administrative attrition. -One hundred-sixteen predicted principal retirements by 2008 (60%). -Response to shortage of highly qualified applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strands based on ISLLC Standards. -Internship of 440 hours. -Mentors. -Personal growth plan. -Develop transition programs and action research projects; data analysis. 	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan to restart program in fall 2010 due to reduced applicant pool.

Table 3-continued

Program No.	Major Goals	Key Processes	Still Operating?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sustain the program beyond the grant-funding period. -Performance oriented program planned. 		
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need highly qualified applicants for administrative positions. -Self-selection does not meet the demands for the job. -In 2004, 98 principals could retire that year. -Seventy-five percent of administrators could retire at any time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Choice of two university partners or alternate program. -SREB model program based on ISLLC Standards; seven modules taught by professors and school division personnel. -Team preplanned in advance. -Internship of 440 hours: 120 hours for each level (elementary, middle, high); 20 hours each in Central Office and Special Education. 	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shifted to university-led alternate licensure program (Fast Track). -School divisions support as they can with personnel and funds.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fastest growing municipality and school system in the nation. -Projected 19 new schools to open by 2012. -Fifty retiring principals plus 19 new principals needed = 69. -Need a leadership succession plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Application process with interview, portfolio. -Must meet university application standards. -At least 5 years of teaching experience. -Commit 3 years to the school division. -Individualized, modular program. 	<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Now a traditional cohort implemented by the university.

four major categories: recommendation of candidates (60%), involvement in the application process (90%), program development (80%), and instructional delivery (50%). See Table 4 for a detailed summary of school division involvement as found in the proposals.

A tally of the major goals listed in the 10 proposals indicated the highest number of programs stated that the primary goal was to fill projected vacancies of principals planning to retire (40% to 90%) from 2004 through 2014. Projected principal vacancies ranged from 40% to 50% turnover within 3 to 6 years. One proposal indicated a need to replace between 77 and 113 leadership positions by 2009. Another proposal by multiple school divisions estimated that 50 qualified principal candidates were needed as soon as possible. Six proposals directly addressed the need to replace up to 75% of the retiring Baby Boomer principals with fully prepared applicants by 2009.

The second highest frequency of written goals in the programs included four proposals that stated a need to increase the number of fully qualified applicants due to shortages in the quality and quantity of the applicant pool in their respective school divisions. One school division reported a significant decline in the number and quality of applicants since 2000. A superintendent relayed his recent challenges in hiring fully qualified principals from a diminishing applicant pool. In 1997 one high school principal vacancy attracted 50 highly qualified applicants. In 2004, 7 years later, the same school division advertised for a high school principal, but only received 15 applications. Due to the marginal quality of the applicants the program director said that personnel had to readvertise for the position.

A professional anecdote from one participating school superintendent illustrated the severe reduction of qualified applicants as representative of a large region in central Virginia. In 1992, he applied for a principalship and competed with 48 qualified applicants. In 1997, the

Table 4
Analysis of District-based Principal Preparation Programs

Program No.	School Division Personnel Actively Involved in Application Process	Participants are Recommended by School Division	School Division Personnel Participate in Program Development	School Division Personnel Participate in Content Delivery
1	X	X	X	X
2	X		Seminars	
3	X	X	X	X
4		X		
5	X	X	X	X
6		X	X	
7		X	X	X
8	X	X	X	
9	X	X	X	
10		X	X	X

same position had fewer than 20 applicants and a neighboring high school principal vacancy had 12 applicants. When the superintendent left that position in 1999, there were only two applicants to replace him. This example reinforced the proposal for an innovative approach to leadership preparation to address hiring needs of various school divisions. This particular proposal described their need as “significant to critical.”

In an urban setting several school divisions combined resources with a local university to address the specific needs of urban schools. In sheer numbers, these partnering divisions have an average of 10 principal or assistant principal vacancies annually. The issue of quantity is not their specific problem, but fully qualified applicants who are prepared for the role of instructional leadership in an urban context is a great concern. A fully qualified new principal must have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of particular schools. According to one proposal that described a shrinking percentage of taxpaying community members with school-age children, school principals must be “savvy communicators” who are skilled in positive communication and rapport within the wider community.

Another consortium of school divisions stressed the need for fully qualified applicants rather than the numbers of teachers who earned certification as administrators but never intended to become an administrator or will never be placed in leadership roles. Each of the school divisions partnering in this program indicated they had an immediate need for eight principals, with a prediction of needing 42 to 48 per division between 2009 and 2014. One proposal referred to a “void in the leadership pipeline.”

In the proposal of a partnership of rural school divisions, it referred to a study from a “few years back” that looked at challenging factors for Virginia’s school divisions. The study had listed challenging factors including educational background of parents, low socioeconomic

status, and density of minority populations. The region was described as having overcome many challenges, yet low incomes were still described as problematic for schools. The proposal stated that they train outstanding teacher leaders only to have them leave the area; essentially they prepare emerging school leaders for positions outside the region where incomes are higher. Additionally, due to large land mass and small population density, there are few schools and “negligible” opportunities for administrative positions. The proposal indicated that budgetary strains had resulted in fewer assistant principal positions across the region, exacerbating the challenges of placing fully prepared new principals in areas with minimal turnover other than retirements. This program director indicated that, in retrospect, it was not fair to raise expectations for a job in rural areas where vacancies can be rare.

Three proposals offered position priority for program completers. One proposal did not define position priority. A second proposal said program completers would receive “priority consideration for vacant administrative positions.” This proposal indicated a commitment by the school division partners to “redefine the pipeline” and “make every effort to place students in leadership positions.” This program planned opportunities for “more and better experiences” by promoting career progression paths other than assistant principal to principal. These paths include curriculum supervisors, assessment specialists, or instructional supervisors. A third proposal described position priority for program completers who are “strongly competitive candidates for administrative leadership openings, but placement is not guaranteed.”

Equal to increasing the number of fully qualified applicants is the goal of continuity of leadership within 4 of the 10 proposals. Having a succession plan to ensure smooth transitions in principal turnovers is critical to these four partnerships. With the time, effort, and funds invested in preparing emerging school principals, these school divisions expressed the desire to retain

promising new leaders. Three of these 4 programs required a commitment to work in their respective school divisions for three or four years upon completion of the alternative licensure program and/or upon attaining an administrative position. In 1 of these 4 programs, two newly prepared administrators left to work in a neighboring school division in Virginia. This program director affirmed their departure without concern, indicating that they were all prepared with state funding and the preparation program did benefit schools in Virginia. This same program director asked for reimbursement of \$1,000 when program completers left the sponsoring school division. The three other programs that required an employment commitment did not define or execute a plan if program completers left prior to the term period.

One proposal described the explosive population surge in their particular region of Virginia with 57 principals needed for new schools opening by 2013, and, 19 new schools had already opened in recent years. The significant increase of pupils in Virginia schools requires advance plans for school divisions to hire new principals. *The Richmond Times Dispatch* published an education editorial on June 30, 2010 that reported the latest figures on school enrollment from the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Findings from the latest Demographic and Workforce Group forecast included an additional influx of 50,000 students in the following 5 years. Eighty-five percent of the increase was predicted to occur in three Northern Virginia school divisions. Changes in pupil enrollment have direct impact upon the numbers of teachers and school administrators hired in school divisions. Although Virginia was commended for evolving alternative licensure for school personnel, the education editorial stated "sharp demographic swings play havoc with long-term planning" (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2010, p. A10).

The 10 proposals were also analyzed for program features, referred to as program elements in this dissertation, and the proposal writers referred to as program components or processes utilized in the 10 programs. A summary of the top eight program elements by frequency are summarized in Table 5, Elements of District-Based Principal Preparation Programs. These eight program elements align with three broader categories that are titled: personal-interactive component, individual-centered component, and contractual component. The personal-interactive component of the principal preparation programs involved candidate interaction with program implementers during the application process and included mentorship, tapping, and a face-to-face interview with representation by school personnel. The individual-centered component included pretests and posttests, portfolio projects, and individual program plans which were focused solely on one individual program participant. The contractual component centered upon agreements between the school division and each program completer. The contractual component included two elements: position priority and a commitment to work in the school division as reimbursement for the monetary investment in the preparation program.

The most frequently noted program elements across the 10 proposals were: assigned mentors and mentor focus (all 10 programs); tapping, principal making recommendation for or nominating candidates (9 programs); an interview during the application process (8 programs); pretests and posttests (5 programs); portfolio projects (4 programs); individual program plans (4 programs); time commitment to work in sponsoring school division after completing the program (3 programs); position priority given completers (3 programs); and career coaching (1 program). All 10 proposals included a mentor focus, although, in some cases other terms were

Table 5

Elements of District-based Principal Preparation Programs

Program No.	Tapping Candidates	Interview During Application	Mentor Focus	Individual Program Plans	Portfolio Project	Pre and Posttests	Position Priority	Time Guarantee to Work
<i>Personal Interactive Component</i>			<i>Individual Centered Component</i>			<i>Contractual Component</i>		
1	x	x	x	x	x	x		3 years
2		x	x			x		
3	x	x	x				x	
4	x		x					4 years
5	x	Exit Interview	x					
6	x	x	x	x	x	x		
7	x	x	x	x	Capstone Project	x	x	
8	x		x			x		
9	x	x	x		x			
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	3 years

used interchangeably (e.g., coaching, intern advising). The definition and application of the term “mentor” seemed to have wide variations in definition across the 10 programs with five programs stressing mentor teams or multiple levels of mentorship in the proposals. Only one proposal focused intently on preparation and training for principal mentors. Other proposals pre-assigned school division personnel for prescribed mentor tasks and roles. A different proposal described a mentor inside the participant’s school as well as another mentor assigned from central office or a different school division. One proposal called for the assigned mentor to continue the mentor relationship with the program completor through the first year as a hired administrator. The continuum of mentorship began with a school division leader “tapping,” or recommending a teacher-leader as well as assuming the role of mentor to that person throughout their program.

Eight of the proposals described an application process that included an interview. The application procedures had varied requirements; some of the programs were geared for the option of earning a master’s degree in Administration and Supervision while others were oriented toward alternative licensure for teacher-leaders with a collegiate professional license or those with master’s degrees in other areas who wanted an additional endorsement in Administration and Supervision. The Virginia Department of Education regulations require a minimum of 3 years of successful classroom instruction prior to earning an Administration and Supervision endorsement. One of the 10 preparation programs raised this to a minimum of 5 years of successful classroom instruction before beginning the application process. Four of the proposals required a writing sample or letter of interest, a submitted portfolio demonstrating leadership and experience, application and acceptance by the university partner, along with a

written recommendation by the candidate's school principal and division superintendent. Two programs required in-basket exercises as part of the application process.

All of the proposals had varied notification and admission procedures. These two procedures included open invitations that were sent to everyone in the participating school divisions, flyers, encouragement to principals to recommend teachers with demonstrated leadership skills, recruitment and tapping or nominating candidates, and "rigorous selection" criteria that were not defined. One proposal indicated that acceptance in their preparation program would not pattern university admission with self-selection. Decisions for acceptance into the 10 programs were made by admission panels. One panel was composed solely of central office personnel who did not personally know the candidates. Proposals varied in planning to assure impartial acceptances as well as awareness of propriety implementing the process.

Assessment of program participants was a program element planned for in six proposals and included pretests and posttests, or one of these types. Pretests were planned to be administered for several reasons stated in the proposals. One proposal planned to utilize pretests to screen leadership potential and personality traits, others planned to rely on "research-based assessments and instructionally valid methods" or GRE scores. Another program utilized the NASSP Individual Professional Skills Assessment administered by program directors and school division personnel. One program proposal included the NAESP Professional Development Inventory and the Gallup Organization's Strengthfinder. Yet another program indicated a 2-stage identification and selection process based upon a rubric created by the program designers that included a "performance based assessment" consisting of a writing prompt and observation of each participant during an in-basket activity. In most proposals, the planned posttest was the

SLLA that is required for administrative licensure in Virginia along with formative feedback from mentors and portfolio presentations.

In 4 of the 10 proposals the various pretests were utilized to create individualized program plans that tailored the content to areas of need for each program participant. One program proposed a “flexible, modular curriculum design” to permit individualization according to each participant’s expertise and learning needs. Career planning and coaching was a corresponding program element in this particular proposal. A different proposal described ISLLC-based assessments throughout the program, relying on obtaining information when each strand was completed. These assessments included ISLLC simulations, the NASSP 360-Degree Self and Observer Assessment, Bolman’s Leadership Orientation’s Assessment, reflection papers, and critiques of action projects planned to benefit each respective school division.

Portfolio projects were a focus of four proposals and a capstone project was a requirement in one program proposal. The portfolios were presented and utilized in various ways, including a requirement of admission that includes recommendations, evidence of successful teaching, leadership ability, interpersonal skills, personal development activities, and written communication skills. Other programs planned portfolios to present accumulated evidence of completed activities throughout the program. Portfolios were also utilized as a second-tier assessment by demonstrating each program completer’s ability to “successfully impact student achievement.” Two program proposals planned to require an electronic internship portfolio containing artifacts to provide evidence of knowledge and skills relative to the ISLLC standards. The only program requiring a capstone project had to be implemented during the internship and featured the “design, implementation, and assessment of a school improvement activity in a team context.”

The contractual component included stated or implied agreements between the respective school divisions and each program participant. In three program proposals, program completers were required to work in the division for an additional 3 to 4 years as reimbursement for the grant-funded preparation for licensure in Administration and Supervision. It was not stated whether this agreement meant work as a teacher or as an administrator; it did not state what the ramifications were for not honoring this commitment. The contractual component of position priority was found in 3 of the 10 proposals; there was no time commitment to work within the district after program completion in these two proposals. Position priority, offered in three different proposals, indicated possible future consideration for administrative positions depending upon vacancies and the candidate pool. In the latter three programs, position priority provided no plan for a time commitment to work after program completion. These two elements were found in 6 of the 10 programs.

Thirty percent of the preparation programs involved 1 year for completion, 20% of the programs were 18 months long, and 50% (half) took 2 years to complete. In all 10 programs content was planned to align with the ISLLC standards while delivery of content and program structure varied. Four programs utilized four to seven modules; five programs planned courses or strands. One program utilized eight seminar sessions with shadowing, action work, leadership conferences, and a paid summer internship to complete the program in 1 year.

Content analysis of the 10 proposals for school district-based principal preparation programs from Virginia in 2004-2006 led to the interview questions posed to each available program director. Phase II of data collection, interviews of program directors, is described next and covers key terms leading to identification of common themes and anything noteworthy found by analyzing and coding the transcribed interviews.

Phase II: Interviews with Program Directors

For this study all 10 program directors of the school district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia from 2004-2006 were contacted to request their participation in this study. These directors received an introductory letter in the mail describing this study. To understand the study and willingly participate in the study, the letter requesting an interview regarding their principal preparation program included the VCU Institutional Review Board approval and Waiver of Consent form. As detailed in the letter, a follow-up phone call was made 7 to 10 days after mailing the letters to request an interview. Phone contacts were made with all 10 program directors and interviews were scheduled with eight of the 10 directors. Program Director J declined due to multiple factors which included retirement at the end of the month and loss of all physical and electronic program information due to office relocation. A university professor contact was listed within that particular proposal and communication was established; this professor agreed to serve in place of the program director and be interviewed. This professor is referred to as Program Director J2 in this study. The final nine interviews were conducted with the program director for each grant except J2; the full-time roles of these 9 directors included: four educational leadership professors; two assistant superintendents; one director with school leadership and political experience; one director of staff development; and one director who was employed by a university and a statewide education organization. The interviewees represented a balance of school division personnel and university faculty (Table 6).

Program Director A agreed to an interview and the school division research department personnel required a complete review before approval could be given by their school division. I returned the completed application package within 2 days. The school division research representative stated the process for approval would take approximately 6 weeks. No approval or

response was received from this school division research department after the application was submitted. I emailed the contact person several times to follow up and was informed again it would take at least 6 weeks for a response. After data collection, data analysis was conducted, and final chapters were composed, the school division mailed a denial of my request to conduct research in their school division because, “there was no direct benefit to them.”

Gender demographics of the nine program directors included three females and six males. Three program directors were university professors who had prior work experience as a principal. One program director was employed by a university as well as a state educational organization. No other demographic data were requested from the program directors.

A final sample size of eight program directors and one professor who was highly involved with the program implementation agreed to an interview; questions were provided to them in advance. This resulted in personal contact and interviews regarding nine district-based partnerships to prepare principals. In two interviews, recommendations were made to contact additional personnel who were involved in implementing the preparation program from the school division or university partnership. Phone messages were left and emails were sent to request additional input regarding perceptions of the respective principal preparation program partnership. Responses were not received and emails to one retired superintendent were returned as “undeliverable.” The demographics (i.e., gender, career, experience as a school principal) of interviewed program directors are summarized in Table 6.

Nine interviews were scheduled and conducted by phone from June 4 through June 28, 2010. The program directors had received information regarding the study in the initial letter requesting their participation, interview questions, and a waiver of consent to participate in this study as approved by the VCU IRB. The interviews were digitally recorded by three methods: a

Table 6

Program Directors' Demographics

Females	3
Males	6
School division personnel	5
University faculty	3
University staff also hired by state education association	1
Program directors who have been school principals	6
University faculty who have been school principals	3

Marantz digital recorder, a digital recorder used to record choral productions, along with recording directly into this researcher's computer with the Audacity recording program. In every interview, the initial taped question was a query to each program director regarding their knowledge of this study, asking if they had further questions about the study and/or the waiver of consent to participate in this study, and asking them for consent to digitally record the interviews and for what was said to be used in published research. Every program director affirmed consent to a taped interview and waived signing consent to participate in this study.

The digital interviews were saved as MP3 and WAV files on a secured external jump drive and hand-delivered to a professional transcriptionist who signed a confidentiality agreement. Typed transcriptions of each interview were made for use during analysis of qualitative data (interview transcriptions) and programs were only identified by random numbers. Upon the completion of each transcription, the transcriber deleted the digital file as well as the transcribed interview. Completed transcriptions were provided and I verified them for accuracy by random samples of digital interviews saved on my home computer. These interviews will be deleted within 6 months of the completion date of this dissertation. Interview tapes were randomly selected and portions of multiple tapes were compared with the transcription for accuracy. Field notes were taken during interviews that provided another source of verification for accuracy.

In Phase II after each interview, I read the transcription in its entirety, then I reread it for a second overview. Thereafter, I began qualitative analyses by color coding similarities for terms, themes, and other noteworthy information. I highlighted similar themes and made margin notes of interpretation of each term and theme. I notated significant thoughts, phrases, and other

important ideas in the margins of the transcribed interviews and then I rewrote them in column form on separate paper for each program.

Data analysis of interview transcriptions and field notes indicated themes within these four areas: Goals, Content, Processes, and Outcomes. In Phase II, goals address the original intent of the programs as well as the reasons behind the goals as perceived by the program directors. Phase II content addresses the knowledge and skills instructed in the programs as perceived by the program directors. Processes address how the programs were implemented. Processes included program delivery and program elements. Outcomes included challenges, unexpected consequences, program continuation, and suggestions for future programs as perceived by program directors. Findings for program goals, program content, key processes, and outcomes are presented sequentially. See Table 7, Program Director Interview Transcriptions, for findings presented in table form.

Program Goals as Perceived by Program Directors

Data analysis of transcribed interviews with program directors indicated findings of common themes related to perceptions of program goals. Program Director D communicated the recollection of the goal, “from the state’s perspective was to take the most successful components from various programs around the state and try to develop a principal preparation program that would be a state model.” Director D reflected that a state model would “ensure a steady, consistent message for principals across the state” and indicated uncertainty that this model “ever really happened.”

The opinion expressed most frequently across program directors was their dissatisfaction with traditional principal preparation programs in terms of producing fully prepared, highly qualified emerging leaders capable of succeeding in raising or keeping achievement scores high.

Table 7

Program Director Interview Transcriptions

Program	Major Goals	Key Processes/Challenges	Outcomes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Practice-based philosophy based on ISLLC Standards. -Practitioner instruction of seven modules. -Avoid stand and deliver "regurgitation." -SLLA Prep Session. -Licensure for teacher leaders with M.Ed. -Place new administrators in positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Technology (50%+). - "Infant stages" of technology in the university led to many problems with connectivity. -Participants were not university students. -Attitudinal issues with higher education colleagues resistant to change. -Different mindset when professors have worked in school division as administrators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continued after grant expired. -Initially high engagement with higher education. -Unintended consequences: Pulled from university student base. -Fast Track program at university. -Practical modules based on ISLLC. -Added seventh module for record keeping, master schedule, etc.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hands-on-practice. -Partner with business community leaders. -Team approach. -Meet needs of unique demographics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -University faculty taught traditional courses. -University faculty had been administrators. -Onsite classes for four school divisions. -Different selection criteria in second year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Gentlemen's Agreement" between school divisions to share applicant pool. -Built a "warehouse of talent." -All completers serving as administrators now.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourage alternative leadership academies. -In the "bubble" with lots of vacancies ahead. -Very few fully prepared candidates in the pipeline. -Dissatisfaction with traditional preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Built around ISLLC Standards and SLLA. -Superintendents made recommendations. -Program completers went to other divisions; okay with director due to state funding. -There were 115-120 program completers. -Multilevels, central office, Special Education internship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Suggest year-long paid internship with salary above teacher and below assistant principal. -Model private sector: Invest during the bad times in preparation for the good times (beyond budget). -Program is discontinued; pipeline is not filled now.

Table 7-continued

Program	Major Goals	Key Processes/Challenges	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need principals who are fully prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century. -"Good, solid professional development." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More selective process each year. -Tapping, mentor focus. -"Innovative models have been canned." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multifaceted continuum of preparation proposed to division.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Program director is retiring 6/30/09. -Records in hard copy and computer lost in relocation of the program director's office. -Located university faculty partner; contacted 6/28/10. -Interviewed professor 6/28/10. -Two different grant programs; first traditional for master's degree, second innovative for licensure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Three universities/8 counties partnership. -Recommended by superintendent. -Preorganization, planning. -Two courses, 10 seminars, internship. -Presenters from the field (ex. State Police and Corrections for safety). -Practical design. -Challenges were communication, coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Built applicant pool that knows the culture of the area. -Grow your own program has available candidates. -Difficult to attract outsiders to small, rural school division.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School division required additional research packet application; no response after submission. 		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individualized programs first year. -Conventional curriculum second year. -Competency-based. -Portfolio focus -Experiments with pathways to licensure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recommended by superintendent. -Deficiencies were defined by the participant. -Commitment to district (this was not defined). -Not much seat time--more online work. -Practical application of knowledge. -Communication and planning challenges. -Organization in first grant program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participation cut into university enrollment. -On hold now due to budget. -Program completers flooded the market and have not been placed. -Large applicant pool now (graduated approximately 100 completers).

Table 7-continued

Program	Major Goals	Key Processes/Challenges	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Needed to define expectations. -Team leader per module/guest speakers. 	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leadership program, not just for principal preparation. -Team relationship with divisions and university. -Relevant assignments to benefit division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Flexible, modular, individualized. -Self-selection initially followed by interview, portfolio, in-basket activity. -Must meet university admission requirements. -Career planning and counseling. -Mentor through first year on the job. -Placement of completers was a challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Time consuming. -Hard to justify time and budget. -Having one cohort per school division is a "better match" due to different issues and needs. -School division contributes partial tuition for university courses (now 30%).
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to grow our own administrators. -Drop in number of qualified applicants. -Budget help for program participants needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blended courses. -Tasks and field work spread throughout the program. -School division staff instructed mainly. -University professor was a school administrator; wrote the curriculum with assistant superintendent. -Candidates nominated by principals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Formed consortium of divisions. -Continue now without grant funds. -Flooded market with candidates and then put program on hold. -Now applicant pool is dropping and program will start again. -University provides "grant pricing" for tuition. -School divisions fill cohorts and assist.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Up to 75% of principals retiring and school divisions needed fully qualified applicants. -Needed to grow our own. -Self-selection process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Portfolio application process. -Fewer hours, fewer courses than traditional. -Seven modules instructed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Most completers were placed in administrative positions. -Met goal of endorsement for master teachers to build candidate pool. -Not in "danger zone" any more.

Table 7-continued

Program	Major Goals	Key Processes/Challenges	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Free program to all candidates. -Geographic rotation of modules. -Tailored to each school division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Specific, relevant assignments during 440-hour internship. -School division personnel and three university faculty instructed. -Communication challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -University "picked up the ball and ran with it" (continued program). -Would have changed self-selection. -Takes time and money for school divisions to implement program.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Components added to traditional program. -Added "hoops" to the interview process. -Higher requirements (5+ years experience). -Formed critical friends group. -More levels of support/mentorship. -Grow our own candidates. -Improve the quality of candidates in pool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frustration, sense of disillusionment on the part of sitting administrators. -Managing strained budget; more to do with less funding. -Hard to get personnel invested in current climate. -Candidate selection was a challenge. -Took strong teachers out of the classroom. -"Trade some things for others." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All still with the school division; several are administrators, none are principals yet. -Camaraderie. -Funded program second time by school division alone (no grant funding). -"Dropped back" to traditional university preparation due to budget. -Year-long paid internship in effect.

Program directors also expressed the need to improve qualified candidates for future administrative vacancies by stimulating new thinking and “outside the box” principal preparation. Terms related to quality and quantity of emerging principal candidates for vacancies were voiced 12 times by multiple program directors. Six program directors addressed the need to balance theoretical instruction with relevant, competency-based instruction based on best practices in the field of educational leadership. Several program directors addressed the changes in schools including high-stakes testing, the accountability movement, along with ongoing societal changes. The past ways of “doing business” in preparing new leaders was viewed as no longer producing instructional leaders who are ready to lead 21st century schools. It was stated that the shortage of fully prepared principal candidates is “severe to critical.”

The phrases “grow our own” and “meet our own needs” were stated by five program directors who were concerned about meeting the unique regional needs of their school division(s). In rural areas program directors expressed their concern that their “brightest and best” get educated and prepared to be school leaders by them, but then leave the area for better opportunities and higher salary scales than small rural areas can provide. This leaves a wake of money invested without gains for which it was targeted. Due to the reduced pay and numbers of opportunities available, those interviewed from rural areas expressed concern about the difficulty in attracting qualified candidates to their school divisions. Rural directors indicated that it is crucial to have school leaders who know the culture of the area as opposed to “outsiders” who may not be able to fit into the culture. Another factor in rural regions is the low density population that led to fewer schools and fewer turnovers in positions. In 2004, when the grant was initiated, 75% of the principals across this rural region were eligible for retirement. Rural Program Director H said that they are in much better shape now (in 2010) regarding their

“pipeline” of fully qualified applicants and they are no longer in the “danger zone like we were for a while, when we really had nobody.” Director H also indicated that most program completers from their program have administrative positions now.

Developing emerging school leaders from the ranks of teachers in the respective school divisions was also discussed by program directors in urban areas. Each region, school division, and school has unique characteristics, demographics, culture, and needs. The ballooning growth in urban, metropolitan areas requires school leaders who can make connections with their community members. As stated by program directors representing urban areas, communication skills along with “savvy” social skills are critical for effective school leadership. Metropolitan areas with forecasted high growth were described as facing the need to hire principals for new schools in addition to anticipated retirements of 40% to 75% by 2010.

Other program goals mentioned by three program directors were aimed at increasing the applicant pool via faster routes to licensure and utilizing the monetary support from the General Assembly and Virginia Department of Education for free preparation to encourage more applicants. Program Director B stressed the need to focus on a wider view of leadership preparation rather than solely focusing on the role of principal.

Program Content as Perceived by Program Directors

The ISLLC standards were the foundation for program content in each of the 10 proposals. The ISLLC standards were mentioned by 5 of the 9 program directors (Directors, G, C, D, F, and I) in the interviews, thus it met the definition of a theme in this research. Data analysis of transcribed interviews indicated few comments related to program content. Four of the directors (Directors G, C, F, and I) who referred to the ISLLC standards also provided some supporting information regarding program content. Program content received brief one-sentence

descriptions each from Director J2 and Director I. Slightly more detailed information was provided by Directors G and F with two to three sentences describing content areas. Director C provided information, examples, and electronic copies of course modules. Director C also shared the districts' written information describing ISLLC requirements for school principals and district-wide leaders.

Two directors referred to content that was abbreviated or absent from their respective programs. Director F described their program thankfully not having “full semesters of finance and law.” Director G described their program as having, “no meaningless theories that don’t help on the day-to-day functioning of principals.” Other directors indicated their programs were nontraditional with fewer classes and less time in courses. One of these said it, “looked different” than traditional courses.

Program Director I described their program content as having “blended law and finance and policy into courses with added concepts” that were applied throughout the program. These content areas were called “topics” by Director F who described differences from traditional courses where, “you go in, sit down, and had a semester class of school law.” Topics are defined as “subjects for discussion or conversation” (Webster, 2001); courses are defined as “a complete series of studies leading to graduation or a degree.” The differences in the two terms, topics and courses, convey a degree of depth as well as amount of instruction involved.

Program Director G referenced materials used to prepare candidates to meet the ISLLC standards in a booklet built around the ETS (Educational Testing Service) school leadership program. Program Director G referred to using this “little notebook type thing” that described the standards and provided learning opportunities to apply the ISLLC standards. Director G said that presenting content about standards such as creating a vision, dealing with a culture, or managing

time and resources, and collaborative partnerships “prompted stimulating intellectual thought processes of decision-making.”

A different content approach was devised by multiple universities in partnership together, according to Program Director J2. The program planners divided the ISLLC standards among the universities who provided instruction to a cohort of participants via separate courses. One university took the “big chunk,” another university provided instruction in school law, and a third university taught finance.

Program Directors C and H referred to “modules” based upon the ISLLC standards. I probed deeper to hear fuller descriptions of these modules. In these programs, the modules were similar to traditional “units of study” used in K-12 education. They also could be described as “mini-courses” based on each of the ISLLC standards. Seven modules were designed with “syllabi embedded in the ISLLC standards.” An additional module was written to include structured internship requirements as well as record-keeping and master schedule.

Program Director C provided an example of an instructional module that included goals, tasks, time outlines, group assignments and names of participants, case studies, development and utilization of rubrics in three case studies, on-line collaborations, “breeze sessions,” role play simulations, and NASSP activities that included an in-basket activity, reflection, and analysis with written communication. This sample module also included multilevel case studies, SLLA writing prompts relevant to three ISLLC standards, description of a task to lead a small group mock accreditation visit, a work plan to verify activity completion with typical number of hours to invest for completion, as well as a detailed rubric for developing a shared vision. Director C described this module as crafted on the Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and Supervisors published by

the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in January 2002 and provided me a copy to keep. In this document the ISLLC standards have a narrative explanation and are accompanied with between three and six detailed actions for each standard. These actions provide descriptions of knowledge and skills required to meet the standards required for “school building leadership and school district leadership.”

One program included content for multiple roles of school leadership and not solely for the principalship. Director B described their program as having opportunities to develop expertise in competencies associated with instructional improvement (e.g., curriculum specialist, supervisors, assessment specialists). Existing resources such as curriculum modules developed by the Ruby Payne Institute, ASCD, ETS, and SREB were incorporated into “modular coursework” implemented by school division personnel, university faculty, and “externally-identified experts who were selected based on their capabilities to instruct leadership proficiencies.”

Program Processes as Perceived by Program Directors

During the 2004-2006 grant cycle the 10 principal preparation programs operated with varying degrees of differences from traditional, university course-delivered programs. According to the descriptions provided during interviews with the program directors, four of the programs provided traditional coursework with added “hoops” such as the interview process or types of program elements (e.g., individualized plans, portfolio) practitioners used to deliver the program. Two of the preparation programs involved partnerships with two different consortia of school divisions; each of the two programs were paired with the same university. The program content and processes were different in terms of instructors and program participants.

Some common process-oriented themes were found in the shades of meaning and number of key terms repeated multiple times by a number of program directors. The term “practice” and derivations of the term (i.e., “practical,” “practitioner”) were used by six program directors for a total of 31 references to “practice”; one of these six program directors used the term “practice” 15 times during the interview. These six program directors viewed the significance of “practical application” as imperative for the full preparation of highly qualified new principals to effectively lead teachers to increase pupil achievement.

Several directors mentioned the historical imbalance of theory and practice, with the need for “real-life, hands-on” experiences in leadership with professionals who had experienced success in improving pupil achievement. The educational leadership professors who submitted each proposal with a school division representative “embraced the challenge for creativity” by designing seven “practical” instructional models aligned with the ISLLC standards. Each practice-based module placed emphasis on application and implementation of the standards. An additional module was added in two programs to include important tasks such as record keeping, observing and evaluating teachers, planning staff development and scheduling classes, as well as a structured internship. A minimum of four modules were required with additional modules completed as determined through individual planning based on needs.

The practitioner orientation included shared instruction with varied combinations of school division personnel that included superintendents and current principals, retired superintendents, and central office personnel, as well as educational leadership faculty. In two programs, business and community leaders shared leadership development training sessions. In these two programs, practitioners conducted seminars in their particular field of expertise. Examples given were seminars conducted on school safety by representatives of the Virginia

State Police as well as speakers from the juvenile corrections department. Program directors voiced praise for the relevance of such seminars.

One program director designed the only program that was implemented solely for one school division (i.e., no partnering with any other school division) in partnership with a local leadership organization developed by retired school superintendents of that particular school division. The only university input was in providing formative evaluation of the program at the end of the 1-year cycle. Final program evaluations as well as numerous administrative job placements earned by the program completers of this partnership were cited by the program director when referring to its exceptionality.

The focus on practical, experiential program delivery was expressed with the term “competency-based” by four program directors. This term referenced knowledge and skills that were measured and evaluated utilizing assessment tools. Some of the programs utilized pretests as described in Phase I of this chapter. Program Director F reiterated that the initial focus of Pretests was to determine individual needs based upon “deficiencies” found in the pretest given to the candidate. This director described the initial preparation program based upon this “pretest and deficiency” model as a “trial and error” approach that avoided “seat time” classes. The director said that the first program worked “okay but not well,” so they “got their act together” by resuming a conventional program of university courses during their second cycle of the principal preparation program that was conducted after the time period of this study.

According to Director F, the deficiency-oriented individualized program did not work well for several reasons. After reviewing assessment results, program participants determined self-deficiencies and helped create their own personal program plan. After implementing and assessing 45 to 48 individualized program plans, the program design team decided to change the

program format to ensure instruction and comprehension of core knowledge and skills that are vital for school principals. In the subsequent grant-funded program with the same personnel, this particular program designed a more “regimented,” structured, course-based program based upon learning from the weaknesses and mistakes from their first program.

Program Elements as Perceived by Program Directors

The application and selection process was discussed by all of the program directors. According to the program directors, application is the initial step for admission and selection is the admission decision made by representatives of the programs. Applicants were either nominated or selected themselves as possible candidates for the programs. All program directors indicated that either the admission process or selection process needed improvement in their respective programs.

The process of nominating a prospective program participant varied widely; all 10 programs required a written recommendation by each candidate’s principal or superintendent. Program Directors G, E and C reported a tapping process where a school leader recommended a candidate and then functioned as that candidate’s mentor throughout the program. Program Directors D, F, B, I, and H presented an open application process that was driven solely by self-selection. These program directors indicated that they relied on the application and interview process.

Seven programs required interviews with the applicant; five programs conducted interviews with panels with both school-division and university personnel on their panel. One panel was comprised solely of central office personnel who reviewed the applicants’ packets and portfolio submissions, then made decisions regarding acceptance of candidates who would be invited into the program. One panel omitted representatives from the candidate’s division to

ensure impartial admission decisions across school divisions. Another interview panel required observed tasks such as writing prompts and in-basket activities.

Only Director G indicated they “perfected the selection process” by “getting more selective in the individuals they chose” by instituting three recommendation steps. These additional steps included: nomination by an administrator; committee members screen and rank the nominees; and finally, a panel interview with each candidate was conducted prior to an invitation to participate in the program. According to Director G, these improvements in the selection process provided a “better end result.” When this program began candidates self-selected to apply. Eventually self-selection transitioned to the nomination or tapping process. In this example, any school leader in the division could nominate a candidate who was then ranked by an independent panel. Director G said that approximately one-half of the nominated candidates were selected for admission into the program. In a different program, Director H stated that the application process needed work, and then said that it was difficult to have a closed application policy by denying interested applicants. Director H indicated that self-selection must be included in admission procedures. Four program directors expressed the need to change the selection process in future programs.

The importance of mentorship, also referred to as coaching, was stressed by six program directors. Noteworthy across programs and data sets is that the proposals included mentorship and mentorship was mentioned as significant. Program directors who perceived mentorship as helpful in the preparation of fully qualified prospective principals also described preplanning specific mentor assignments and advance training of the mentors as being valuable for reaching their goal. Enthusiasm regarding the positive influences and successes of the mentorship element was noted by program directors who had detailed plans for mentorships written in their proposal

for funding. Typically, mentors from the same school or school division as the program participant were paired, although three programs utilized “layers” of mentors by assigning additional supportive coaches, intern advisors, and interdivision collegial partnerships. In one program practical district-level assignments were designed to benefit the program participant and the school division. This involved pairing with experienced central office staff for collaboration on projects to benefit the school division, such as school improvement plans. Participants with individual program plans met regularly with design team members who monitored their progress.

Two preparation programs had structured mentoring and coaching support that continued through the induction year as a new administrator. Quality mentoring was viewed as a “critically important component” that resulted in higher levels of confidence and skill development as well as a network of colleagues that reduce isolation. This mentoring also provided more meaningful feedback, promoted reflective leadership practice, and focused on essential leadership questions. A Critical Friends Team was assembled in one preparation program with assigned combinations of five mentor-mentee pairs and facilitated by a university faculty advisor. These teams met monthly for 2 hours to discuss practicum/internship experiences, team problem solving, shared decision making, and sharing resources. To provide continuity of support these strategies were designed to continue through the first years as a new principal.

Directors F and B viewed the program element of individualized program plans as an idea that did not work. In addition to the extra time required to administer and interpret pretests, analyze areas of weakness followed by team meetings to craft an individualized plan, this left a wide range of individual needs to meet rather than ensuring competency of core knowledge and skills. Both of these program directors reported reverting to traditional coursework in subsequent grant-funded programs beyond the scope of this study.

A time guarantee to work was an element in three programs. This was an agreement by the program completers to continue employment in the school division for 3 or 4 years to compensate for investment in the preparation. Some programs had no explicit plan for consequences should the commitment not be honored. Program Directors H and B entitled this commitment an “ethical commitment” whereas another program required that a \$1,000 reimbursement be paid to the school division if they left the school division before working the number of years specified. This did happen twice in that division, yet it worked to everyone’s satisfaction and benefit because the program completer left honorably, paid \$1,000 back to the sponsoring school division, and probably gained an estimated \$10,000 to \$12,000 raise over their teacher salary. The \$1,000 was established as a “great deal” since the \$480 cost of the SLLA was covered and the preparation program was free to the participants. A bottom line viewpoint held by Director G was that state funds prepared the program completers and their expertise remained in Virginia which benefited the state.

Program Outcomes as Perceived by Program Directors

One outcome of the grant-funded programs can be analyzed by the continuation, modified continuation, or discontinuation of the alternative principal preparation programs. Of the nine programs represented by program directors, only three programs continued beyond the conclusion of the state funding. These three programs are operated by their respective university partners while the school divisions participate by selecting a cohort of program participants and contribution of funds of 30% to 50% tuition payment. Two of these three programs modified their original curriculum and offer two practitioner-oriented options for program participants. One option is intended for Fast Track licensure based upon practical modules aligned with the ISLLC standards and the second one is a more traditional, course-oriented track that leads to a

Master's degree. The third program still operating is a more traditional course-oriented program leading to either licensure or a master's degree and the partnering school divisions select cohort members and provide 30% tuition support.

Director B indicated their school district-based principal preparation program is still operating. Interestingly, s/he described a traditional college-course program implemented solely by university faculty. This program is the third program referenced in the preceding paragraph. This one school division, formerly involved in a multi-division and university partnership, budgeted 30% of tuition support for program participants during the 2009-2010 school year. Another university offers "grant pricing" to their partner school division's program participants. This has provided half-price tuition funded in part by the school division; thus the university and school division share partial funding support for program participants.

Unexpected Consequences Perceived by Program Directors

The topic of unintended consequences of the district-based principal preparation programs brought up discussion by multiple program directors. Two directors explained the impact on traditional university educational leadership programs that faced a "shrinking student pool." A university faculty member stated that the first rounds of the grants were wonderful and "actively engaged" by other university personnel along with school division personnel. In the third year of this program nontraditional programs began to "suck up the population that would normally apply for traditional graduate work and making it unusually hard on university programs to recruit for the next couple of years, because that available pool was beginning to shrink from the teacher forces." The faculty member was referring to the loss of potential master's degree students in educational leadership programs. According to this professor, the university is still feeling the impact, but recovered by creating a licensure program for people

who already hold master's degrees. The loss of the university student base was not foreseen. See Table 8, Program Directors' Aggregate Recommendations, for lists of unexpected consequences, different actions program directors would take if they were able to plan the program again, and challenges they faced. When asked about challenges in developing and implementing the programs, the directors portrayed unexpected and unforeseen issues. Technology was a concern in multiple grant-funded programs in several respects. Because the program participants were not enrolled in the university, participants did not have university approval to utilize university-sponsored technology, connections, and web sites. Communication between implementers and participants required advance establishment of working emails and Internet connections. According to Program Director H, the city changed their Internet service provider in the midst of a grant-funded program, resulting in "emails going every which way."

The topic of administrative placement of program completers into administrative positions had mixed perceptions by the program directors. Directors E and H reported that all program completers had received administrative positions within their respective school division partnerships. Directors G and D indicated that "most" of the program completers achieved their goal of receiving an administrative position. Despite future anticipated retirement vacancies, Director F described a "flooded job market" with over 100 program completers for limited vacancies at that time. Directors B and H indicated that the school budget shortfall and economic challenges across the country have affected the projected retirement vacancies, as more principals have chosen to continue working longer than originally anticipated.

Table 8

Program Directors' Aggregate Recommendations

Unexpected Consequences	Would Have Done Differently	Challenges
-Undefined expectations.	-Preplanning thoroughly.	-Communication with participants (email, BlackBoard, etc.).
-What does rigor look like for PPP?	-Define expectations.	-Technology glitches with new software.
-University programs impacted by loss of student pool.	-Rubric for portfolio.	-Technology problems with participant use of university technology without being a matriculated student.
-Commitment to school division--how to define and enforce.	-Specific rubric for projects.	-Logistics, cohesion, lack of planning.
-Budget shortfalls that ended seven grant-funded programs.	-Train mentors.	-Minimal turnover in rural areas that led to lack of administrative placements or loss of "best and brightest."
-Not as many administrative vacancies as anticipated.	-Clear expectations for mentors.	-University faculty experienced "attitudinal challenges" regarding change/reform due to beliefs that the "only way to teach is in a classroom for 15 weeks with a read and regurgitate mentality."
-Flooded job market with candidates.	-Standardize candidate application process.	-Individual plans based on deficiencies did not work.
-Mentors' relationships varied widely and some were ineffective.	-Standardize candidate interview process.	
-Self-selection affected quality of program completers.	-Change self-selection process.	
	-Become more selective with candidates.	
	-Maintain one division in a cohort.	

Table 8-continued

Unexpected Consequences	Would Have Done Differently	Challenges
-Relevance of program needed definition.	-Offer a paid internship for 1 year with a salary between teaching and administration.	-Disorganized; content and speakers overlapped without prior planning.
-The programs that continued forward with practical orientation were led by university professors with school administrative experience.	-Prevent innovative models from getting "canned."	-School division cannot justify time and money to continue.
-"Trade some things for others."	-Follow through with planned professional development for school administrators.	-Programs needed formal evaluation.
-Curriculum shift in higher education at three universities with practitioner orientation.	-Different set of technology applications.	-Unfair to raise expectations for a job.
	-"In my heart, I felt we had a really good program with good, solid professional development.	-Higher education needed an intercollegial agreement for partnerships.
	-Saturday classes.	-Interval years between programs due to a flooded job market.
		-Selection process--how to end self-selection without denying applicants.
		-School division "dropped the ball and canned the program."

One program director said that neighboring school divisions “snatched” many of the program completers from this program due to their excellent preparation. In contrast, another program devised a “gentleman’s agreement” in which any program completers of the partnership consortium were considered as part of the larger pool of candidates for all future administrative positions in any of the participating school divisions. This approach resulted in a “fair game” compromise for applying and hiring program completers from for all participating divisions.

Challenges as Perceived by Program Directors

Advance team planning and logistics of schedules along with geographic locations for planning and delivering courses provided challenges for some of the program directors. Program Director H decided to rotate course locations within the partner school divisions whereas Directors C and J2 selected one central location for all modules. It became apparent to me that some of the programs were thoroughly planned in advance while others operated with a “trial and error” approach. Director F indicated they were “feeling their way around” and learned from the mistakes made during the first grant cycle to make dramatic program changes for the second cycle with traditional coursework instructed by university faculty. Director B explained that participation in the grant-funded programs was time consuming for school division personnel and, with stricter budgetary restraints annually, they cannot justify spending time in planning and implementation when the universities are in place to educate and train.

Challenges in the higher education arena were portrayed as resistance to change and “attitudinal” issues. Program Director C, a professor, stated, “Sometimes we fought our own folks because there are beliefs that the only way you can teach students is to put them in a classroom for 15 weeks, one night a week, with a read and regurgitate mentality.” As a former school administrator, this university professor relayed efforts to influence reform in educational

leadership with the statement, “Unfortunately, it’s a battle I deal with all the time because my mindset is very different in terms of the philosophical approach versus practical. That’s why the ISLLC’s [*sic* standards] are so exciting for us, that it’s really what we truly believe our program is about.” This dissonance contributed to a major philosophical and curriculum shift toward practitioner focus rather than maintaining a “philosophical approach” to the degree and licensure programs.

Program Director G relayed frustration regarding not being able to sustain their successful program. Director G proposed a multifaceted plan for continuation of their principal preparation program as the first step in a formalized continuum of professional development. This program received accolades from completers and educational leadership faculty for excellence along with great respect in the educational arena. This plan benefited new and existing school leaders but it did not receive a response from the division-wide personnel who “dropped the ball.” According to Director G, the principal preparation program was “canned” despite ongoing concerns about a leadership void in their applicant pool.

Program Director B mentioned the challenge to obtain current principals as volunteer mentors. S/he viewed the challenge of varying degrees of success as dependent on the commitment level of the mentor. This program director pointed to inequity in the levels of support provided by different mentors. Director B referenced the commitment level or finding enough current principals to serve as mentors as partially attributed to budget shortfalls resulting in more responsibilities and inability to add mentoring. As Director D pointed out, taking on a role as a mentor requires time and energy beyond the expectations for principals. Program Director D stated, “If we cannot fund salary increases, how can we justify asking our folks to go above and beyond with dwindling resources?”

Positive Outcomes Perceived by Program Directors

Positive outcomes outweighed the challenges as reported by most of the program directors. Several directors reported satisfaction with “planting a seed” for reforms adopted by several universities, shifts in licensure regulations, and a paradigm shift toward practitioner skills based upon the ISLLC standards. These directors described both finding balance, or middle ground between theoretical and practical preparation for emerging principals and experiencing satisfaction with stimulating, “new thinking” regarding preparation of emerging principals. Director C indicated that their division’s program requirement of a candidate recommendation by the superintendent led to the, “final outcome in the state regs that anybody applying for alternative licensure routes for school leadership has to have a request from the superintendent to enter that track.” A paid, year-long internship was adopted after the grant funding concluded. A paid internship provides the opportunity for immersion with support while providing a school with an additional administrator.

Directors relayed positive outcomes from the opportunity to provide free preparation programs and geographical convenience to potential leaders. These benefits encouraged teacher leaders to apply to the alternative programs. Team participation by university, school, and community personnel received approval and appreciation by everyone interviewed for this study. Several program directors indicated the programs were “well worth the money.” The opportunity to craft innovative ways to prepare emerging principals led to this range of 10 diverse grant-funded programs. All of the program directors expressed praise for the relevance of practitioner-oriented preparation that is applicable on a daily basis for school leaders. The ongoing collegial discussions about case studies, school improvement, and problem solving were aimed toward practical knowledge and understanding rather than “the one right answer.” As one

leader stated, “There are multiple ways to Damascus, but can you explain why you took the road you took?”

Interviewing the program directors made it clear to me that team relationships among program implementers, planning on a regular basis, and review meetings were critical to success. Directors conveyed views of mutual respect and teamwork built on the strengths of involved implementers. Practical expertise of school division personnel and instructional skills of university faculty were acknowledged by program directors. The balance of program delivery with a practical orientation was invaluable according to the program directors. Participation in a cohort model with colleagues from multiple school divisions was deemed valuable by most of the program directors. Only Director B expressed the preference to operate independently in future leadership programs. Several directors conveyed that ongoing communication developed a strong relationship between the schools and university which made the programs stronger. The teamwork included ongoing “regrouping, strategizing, a good connection” and working closely with program participants. Director D expressed dismay that this partnership was not able to continue after the grant funding concluded.

As reported by six program directors, the positive rapport and collegial team connections were deemed necessary and critical to the perceived success of the programs. The opportunity to network with colleagues within and across school divisions was invaluable. The programs that defined structured mentor planning and pairing in the proposals had program directors who praised mentorship as a benefit of their program. One program had a mentor assignment engaged during an externship with business leaders in the community, as well as ongoing leadership development seminars for the cohort.

Recommendations From Program Directors

One question posed to the program directors asked what they would have done differently if they had the opportunity to plan their program over again. Responses included “nothing, it was great as it was,” and such items as preplanning, organization, and thoroughly preparing mentors. Expectations of program instructors and participants needed advance clarification along with rubrics to guide portfolios and projects. Most program directors viewed the interview process as needing to be standardized and explicitly defined for applicants. Director J2 mentioned the need for Saturday courses to help meet the time challenges of school personnel delivering the program including building principals who taught and mentored.

Directors D and G proposed a year-long internship with a salary scale higher than the teacher salary scale but lower than the administrative salary scale. Director G recommended that the year-long internship begin on July 1 and conclude on June 30 in order to participate in opening and closing a school year. Opening and closing a school year was described as crucial to have experience helping lead. Several other school divisions endorsed a 440-hour multilevel internship which provided 120 hours experience each in elementary, middle, and high school. Also part of this recommendation was an additional internship requirement with 20 hours for special education and 20 hours in central office. Director G stated that, “We throw people into the frying pan too quickly sometimes,” so a proposed 2-year-long residency has merit to prepare new principals to face the “good, bad and the ugly.”

Program directors reported that self-selection of applicants affected the quality of emerging school principals and indicated a need for an admission rubric. More than half of the program directors expressed a need for defined expectations (e.g., who does what in terms of preparation, expectations of candidates) for instruction and coursework along with a clear picture

of rigor in the programs. The required portfolio projects varied widely in content and purpose. Some programs utilized the portfolio as evidence of competency or a career interview tool, where other programs required portfolios for admission or to conduct a relevant project to benefit that particular school division. There was general agreement across program directors that advance planning and clear expectations need to be defined for future principal preparation programs. An example of advance planning includes a defined commitment to work for the school division upon the conclusion of the preparation program.

It is noteworthy that the directors of the adapted university-school division partnerships that continued after 2006 are educational leadership faculty who has on-site experiences as school administrators. When referencing the loss of top classroom teachers or the financial investment by the school division, Director D stated, “You trade one thing for another.” In addressing costs and benefits, another program director stated, “In the private sector, the most successful businesses are those that invest during the bad times in preparation for the good times.” These successful program directors consider it imperative to continue innovative partnerships.

A summary across programs with recommendations from program directors are detailed in Table 7. This table lists the outcomes including recommendations for planning future partnerships as well as perceived challenges. Table 9 summarizes the triangulation of proposals, program directors’ interviews and field notes as described in Phase II.

Phase III: Survey of Program Completers

The experiences and perceptions of program completers were important to this study in order to analyze the perceived outcomes of the 2004-2006 district-based principal preparation programs. The Web-based survey described in chapter 3 was used (Appendix C). Demographic

Table 9

Triangulation of Grant Goals, Program Directors' Goals and Outcomes

Program	Major Program Directors' Goals	Major Grant Proposal Goals	Outcomes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Practice-based philosophy based on ISLLC Standards. -Practitioner instruction of seven modules. -Avoid stand and deliver "regurgitation." -SLLA Prep Session. -Licensure for teacher leaders with M.Ed. -Place new administrators in positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop best practices model of alternative licensure. -Increase number of highly qualified administrative applicants. -Need fully prepared, high qualified personnel to fill 50% administrative vacancies in 3-5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continued after grant expired. -Initially high engagement with higher education. -Unintended consequences: Pulled from university student base. -Fast Track program at university. -Practical modules based on ISLLC. -Added seventh module for record keeping, master schedule, etc.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hands-on practice. -Partner with business community leaders. -Team approach. -Meet needs of unique demographics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to replace 40% of administrators within 8 years. -Ensure continuity of leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -"Gentleman's Agreement" between school divisions to share applicant pool. -Built a "warehouse of talent." -All completers serving as administrators now.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourage alternative leadership academies. -In the "bubble" with lots of vacancies ahead. -Very few fully prepared candidates in the pipeline. -Dissatisfaction with traditional preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to replace 77-113 leadership positions by 2009. -School division began leadership development in 2001. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Suggest year-long paid internship with salary above teacher and below assistant principal. -Model private sector: Invest during the bad times in preparation for the good times (beyond budget).

Table 9-continued

Program	Major Program Directors' Goals	Major Grant Proposal Goals	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need principals who are fully prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century. -"Good, solid professional development." 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Program discontinued; pipeline is not filled now. -Multifaceted continuum of preparation proposed to division.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Program director is retiring 6/30/09. -Records in hard copy and computer lost in relocation of the program director's office. -Located university faculty partner; contacted 6/28. -Interviewed professor 6/28/10. -Two different grant programs; first traditional for master's degree, second innovative for licensure. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Built applicant pool that knows the culture of the areas. -Grow your own program has available candidates. -Difficult to attract outsiders to small, rural school divisions.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School division required additional research packet application; no response after submission. 		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individualized programs first year. -Conventional curriculum second year. -Competency-based. -Portfolio focus. -Experiments with pathway to licensure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multiple school divisions need to prepare 50 highly qualified candidates for anticipated vacancies. -By 2009, 20%-79% of school division administrators may retire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participation cut into university enrollment. -On hold now due to budget. -Program completers flooded the market and have not been placed.

Table 9-continued

Program	Major Program Directors' Goals	Major Grant Proposal Goals	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -By 2014, 40%-90% of administrators may retire. -Decline in number and quality of applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Large applicant pool now (graduated approximately 100 completers).
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leadership program, not just for principal preparation. -Team relationship with divisions and university. -Relevant assignments to benefit division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Traditional educational leadership programs are not preparing leaders who are equipped to lead challenging urban schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Time consuming. -Hard to justify time and budget. -Having one cohort per school division is a "better match" due to different issues and needs. -School division contributes partial tuition for university courses (now 30%).
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need to grow our own administrators. -Drop in number of qualified applicants. -Budget help for program participants needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Historical assessment of administrative attrition. -One hundred-sixteen predicted principal retirements by 2008 (60%). -Response to shortage of highly qualified applicants. -Sustain the program beyond the grant funding period. -Performance oriented program planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Formed consortium of divisions. -Continue now without grant funds. -Flooded market with candidates and then put program on hold. -Now applicant pool is dropping and program will start again. -University provides "grant pricing" for tuition. -School divisions fill cohorts and assist.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Up to 75% of principals retiring and school divisions needed fully qualified applicants. -Needed to grow our own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need highly qualified applicants for administrative positions. -Self-selection does not meet the demands for the job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Most completers were placed in administrator positions. -Met goal of endorsement for master teachers to build candidate pool.

Table 9-continued

Program	Major Program Directors' Goals	Major Grant Proposal Goals	Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Self-selection process. -Free program to all candidates. -Geographic rotation of modules. -Tailored to each school division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In 2004, 98 principals could retire that year. -Seventy-five percent of administrators could retire at any time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not in "danger zone" any more. -University "picked up the ball and ran with it" (continued program). -Would have changed self-selection. -Takes time and money for school divisions to implement program.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Components added to traditional program. -Added "hoops" to the interview process. -Higher requirements (5+ years experience). -Formed critical friends group. -More levels of support/mentorship. -Grow our own candidates. -Improve the quality of candidates in pool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fastest growing municipality and school system in nation. -Projected 19 new schools to open by 2012. -Fifty retiring principals plus 19 new principals needed = 69. -Need a leadership succession plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All still with the school division; several are administrators; none are principals yet. -Camaraderie. -Funded program second time by school division alone (no grant funding). -"Dropped back" to traditional university preparation due to budget. -Year-long paid internship in effect.

data of program participants who responded to the survey are provided and analyses of qualitative responses, provided by program completers, are detailed. Data analysis of four areas (goals, content, processes, outcomes), in which themes were revealed, were consistent with findings in Phase I/proposals and Phase II/interviews of program directors. Content refers to “subject matter” covered in the programs. Processes refer to how the content was covered, focused on, and presented.

Demographic Data

The demographic data collected indicated that the program completers who participated in this study were predominantly female, Caucasian and between the ages of 36 and 40 during their principal preparation program. The respondents represented 8 of the 10 programs with 3 to 24 survey respondents per program. Frequency of survey responses indicated 35% were high school teachers during the principal preparation program and 33% reported working as an assistant principal at the time of the survey in June 2010. Survey respondents indicated their endorsement areas prior to participation in the programs were: Elementary Education, English, History, and Special Education.

Respondents reported their race as Caucasian (89.3%), African-American (8.0%), and bi-racial (2.7%). Respondents represented eight preparation programs with a range of 3 to 24 surveys completed per program. Three survey respondents also indicated additional educational leadership coursework was taken through a traditional university program.

Figure 1 represents demographic data provided by the survey respondents. More females (80%) than males (20%) completed the survey. The majority of the respondents were in the following age ranges during the 2004-2006 principal preparation program cycles: 36-40 (24%),

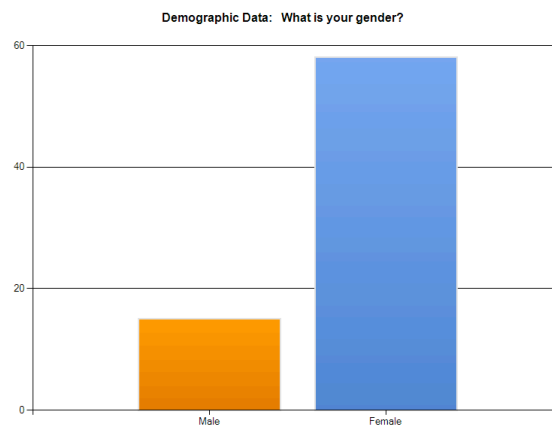


Figure 1. Demographic data

46-50 (19%), 31-35 (17%), and 41-45 equaled 51-55 (13%). Table 10 summarizes age range responses.

Due to no email addresses provided by one program and the refusal to participate by a second program, eight programs were represented in this survey. Program Director I neither provided email addresses nor forwarded the request to program completers. The school division of Program Director A declined to participate in the study, stating this study would not directly benefit them. Thus, two preparation programs are not included in respondent outcomes.

Endorsements across many disciplines were reported by all 75 survey completers and are summarized in Table 11. The majority of respondents reported endorsements in Elementary K-8 (19), English (13), History (12), and Exceptional Education (10). In the web-based survey, respondents could check multiple endorsement categories and report additional endorsement areas in open-ended text. Teachers reported single as well as multiple endorsements, thus career positions may not be associated with any one particular endorsement.

Goals of Program Completers

Program completers were not asked questions about their goals for participating in principal preparation. It may be assumed that elective participation in preparation for licensure as an administrator implies the goal of attaining this license. It is assumed that some, if not most, of the program completers began the principal preparation programs with a principalship career goal. The following section presents the findings for program participants' responses regarding employment.

Employment questions were posed to program completers regarding possible job changes within and among school divisions. As indicated in Table 12, Survey Responses Regarding Employment, 93.3% of responding program completers are still employed by their sponsoring

Table 10

Age Range of Program Completers

<u>Principal Preparation Program Completers</u>		
What was your age range during your principal preparation program?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
20-25	0.0	0
26-30	8.2	6
31-35	16.4	12
36-40	24.7	18
41-45	13.7	10
46-50	19.2	14
51-55	13.7	10
56-60	4.1	3
61-65	0.0	0
66-70	0.0	0
70-75	0.0	0
<hr/>		
Answered question	73	
Skipped question	0	

Table 11

Endorsements of Program Completers

Endorsement Area	Percent (%)	Number Reported	Sample = n
Elementary K-8	25.3	19	75
English	17.3	13	75
History/Social Studies	16.0	12	75
Exceptional Education	13.3	10	75
Middle School	13.3	10	75
Preschool	10.6	8	75
Math	9.3	7	75
Science	8.0	6	75
School Counselor	8.0	6	75
Reading	6.6	5	75
Health and Physical Education	5.3	4	75
Visual and Performing Arts	5.3	4	75
NK-4	4.0	3	75
Business	2.6	2	75
One each: Journalism, Theatre Arts, ESL, Library, French, Pupil Personnel	1.3	1	75

Table 12

Survey Responses Regarding Employment

Question	Yes (%)	Yes (#)	No (%)	No (#)	n
Are you still employed by your sponsoring school division?	93.3	70	6.7	5	75
Did you receive a principal position in school division?	18.7	14	81.3	61	75
Did you receive a principal position in a different division?	2.7	2	97.3	72	74
Did you receive an administrative position?	41.3	31	58.6	44	75
Did you apply for an administrative position?	72	54	20	15	69

school division and 6.7% are no longer working in the school division that sponsored their preparation program. Fourteen respondents (18.6%) indicated they received a principal position within their sponsoring school division and 81.3% (61) did not receive a principal position. Two respondents reported being hired for a principal position in a different division, not part of their programs' partnership. Overall, 41.3%, (31) of program completers responding to the survey indicated they received an administrative position after completion of their preparation program, while 58.7% (44) did not receive an administrative position. It is helpful to note that 78.3% (54) of the 69 completers responding to this question applied for administrative positions and 21.7% (15) of completers responding to this question did not apply for an administrative position. According to additional comments provided by survey respondents, some program completers determined that administrative positions were not desired or that their current family conditions precluded administrative applications now. Many of the program completers plan to apply for an administrative position in the future. See Table 11 for responses to employment questions.

To examine position changes including earned administrative positions, program completers were asked to provide their job position titles during the time they were in their principal preparation program and their current job position titles when they responded to the survey. Table 13, Changes in Position Reported by Survey Completers, summarizes the reported number of job positions during principal preparation programs in 2004-2006 and the current positions reported at the time of the survey responses. This table summarizes results approximately 4 years after licensure was earned by program completers. Promotions to assistant principal received the highest change with 22 promotions. The number of reported promotions to principal was 6 which is a discrepancy with 14 reported principal positions in Table 11, Survey Responses Regarding Employment. It is possible that some program completers who also

Table 13

Change in Position Reported by Survey Completers

Position Title	During Program	Current Position/ Retired	Changes
Elementary teacher	12	5	-7
Middle School teacher	14	9	-5
High School teacher	26	16/2	-10
Department chairperson	10	4	-6
Instructional specialist	4	4	-
Central Office position	4	4	-
Administrative Assistant or Dean	1	1	-
Assistant Principal	0	22	+22
Principal	0	7	+7
Unknown	0	-1	-1
Left Education	0	-4	-4
Other promotions: Lead teacher	-	1	1
Other promotions: Instructional coach	-	1	1
Other promotions: Director CTE	-	1	1

became assistant principals responded affirmatively to the question posed in Table 12 regarding receiving a principal position and grouped together both job titles.

Three program completers retired and four left the field of education. In the qualitative input on the survey, respondents reported frustration with lack of promotions despite opportunities to apply. Survey comments indicated that in their entire cohort of six school divisions, no colleagues have been moved into administrative positions, thus leading to frustration and leaving the field. The 75 respondents representing eight programs indicated that 41.3% of program completers achieved an administrative position. Attainment of an administrative position by fewer than one-half of program participants signals a gap in perceptions of program directors, most of whom articulated goal achievement of placing fully prepared emerging principals into administrative positions.

The job changes since the programs occurred indicate that teaching positions and teacher-leader positions declined in number, while administrative positions increased. The job changes of 29 teachers and department head chairpersons not only indicate that their goals may have been achieved in gaining administrative positions, but it likely demonstrates the loss of excellent classroom teachers and teacher-leaders from having closer contact with pupils. These gain and loss data support one program director's view that there are gains in some school division goals with loss of other things when growing their own administrators. See Table 13 for a detailed summary of survey responses regarding changes in position as reported by program completers who responded.

Further data analysis of promotions to administrative positions since the completion of the principal preparation programs indicated promotions by gender, percent of all completers, and percent from respective principal preparation programs. To ensure confidentiality and avoid

program comparisons, programs were assigned random alpha codes. Since the conclusion of the principal preparation programs in this study, 9.3% of program completers who responded to the survey have attained a principal position. Of these principals, 28.5% are males and 71.5% are females. All of these principals were prepared in two programs; Program X produced 57% of these new principals and Program Z produced 43%. Of all program completers who participated in the survey, 29.3% have attained a position of assistant principal. The assistant principals are 27.3% males and 72.7% females who were trained in six programs. It is noteworthy that Programs X and Z also prepared 13.6% and 18% of the new assistant principals. See Table 14 for a data summary.

Table 14

Gender and Program Promotions. Analysis of Promotions to Administrative Positions

Promotion Position	% of All Completers	Males n	Males % of Promotions	Females n	Females % of Promotions	% Promotions From These Programs
Principal	9.3	2	28.5	5	71.5	X - 57 Z - 43
Assistant Principal	29.3	6	27.3	16	72.7	L - 22.7 X - 18.0 Z- 13.6 Q - 13.6 R - 9.1 S - 9.1

It is important to scrutinize administrative promotion data because the goals of the district-based principal preparation programs, the program directors, and the program participants were placement of fully qualified, newly prepared school principals to fill vacancies. Further data analysis revealed promotions from specific job titles during the principal preparation program by frequency and percent of each job title as well as percent of all completers. Job titles were self-reported by survey participants. Other promotions refer to central office positions, instructional specialist, testing coordinator, and administrative assistant.

As summarized in Table 15, Promotions by Job Title, teachers were the largest group from whom principals and assistant principals were promoted. The total number of teachers ($n = 55$) promoted to principal (3) and assistant principal (15) represented 43.63% of all teachers promoted. Six teachers attained other promotions (11% of all teachers). When all administrative promotions are considered together, these 24 promotions represent 43.63 of all teachers who participated in this study. When teacher to administrator promotions are calculated by all program participants ($n = 75$), 4.0% of teachers became principals and 20% of teachers became assistant principals.

Guidance counselors ($n = 7$) were the second largest job title promoted to an administrative position with two principals and two assistant principals. Fifty-seven percent of guidance counselors were promoted to administrative positions, and these promoted counselors represent 2.67% of all program completers ($n = 75$). Instructional specialists ($n = 5$) attained two administrative positions which represents 40% of all participating instructional specialists, and 1.30% of all 75 program completers. Administrative assistants, a reading coach and a psychologist were also promoted. Please see Table 15.

Table 15

Promotions by Job Title

Job Title During PPP ^a	Number Promoted	Percent of Job Title	Percent of All Completers (n = 75)
Teacher (n = 55)	Principal - 3 Assistant Principal - 15 ^b Other Promotions - 6	Principal - 5.45 Assistant Principal - 27.27 Other - 9.09	Principal - 4.0 Assistant Principal - 20.0 Other - 6.67
Guidance Counselor (n = 7)	Principal - 2 Assistant Principal - 2	Principal - 28.57 Assistant Principal - 28.57	Principal - 2.67 Assistant Principal - 2.67
Instructional Specialist (n = 5)	Principal - 1 Assistant Principal - 1	Principal - 20.0 Assistant Principal - 20.0	Principal - 1.30 Assistant Principal - 1.30
Central Office Positions (n = 4)	Principal - 1	Principal - 25.0	Principal - 1.30
Administrative Assistant (n = 2)	Assistant Principal - 2	Assistant Principal - 100	Assistant Principal - 2.67
Reading Coach (n = 2)	Assistant Principal - 1	Assistant Principal - 50.0	Assistant Principal - 2.67
Psychologist (n = 1)	Other Promotion - 1	Other - 100.0	Other - 1.30

^aPPP = Principal Preparation Programs^bOther promotions include Central Office, Instructional Specialist, Testing Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant

Job promotion data were analyzed individually by job title and respective principal preparation programs that prepared each survey respondent. To maintain confidentiality and avoid comparisons of programs, random letters were assigned to the various programs. The data in Table 16, Administrative Promotions of Program Completers, indicate specific job titles and instructional levels of promoted teachers (elementary, middle, or high school).

When analyzing the job promotion data by overall promotions, 38.6% of all 75 program completers in this study attained a principal or assistant principal position, while 61.3% did not receive one. When considering the seven “other promotions” to instructional specialist, central office, testing coordinator, and administrative assistant, the total of all administrative promotions is 36 (48%) of all 75 survey respondents; 15 survey respondents indicated they did not apply for an administrative position, thus 60 respondents, 60% of respondents who applied received an administrative position.

Information provided by the survey respondents varied based on different interpretations of the terms administrator and principal. Principal could be interpreted as principal or principal and assistant principal positions. Administrator might have been interpreted as a principal, assistant principal or other building or district level position under the umbrella of “administrator” or interpreted as not a principal or assistant principal. When asked about job titles during the program after completion, employment data, receiving a principalship, receiving an administrative position (questions 6 through 12 in the survey), the responses were not consistent across the questions. As detailed in tables 12, 13, and 15, responses regarding promotion to a principal position included 6, 7, and 14 affirmative responses. Responses also varied regarding promotion to assistant principal (21 or 22) and an administrative position (31).

Table 16

Administrative Promotions of Program Completers

Position During Program	Position as of June 2010	No. of Promotions	Program by Random Letter
High School Teacher	Principal	2	X, Z
Guidance Counselor	Principal	2	X, Z
Instructional Specialist	Principal	1	Z
Central Office Position	Principal	1	X
Elementary School Teacher	Principal	1	X
7 Principal promotions = 2 males; 5 females			
22 Assistant Principal promotions = 6 males; 16 females			
High School Teacher	Assistant Principal	6	L, L, Q, Q, Z, L
Middle School Teacher	Assistant Principal	6	S, S, L, L, X, Z
Elementary School Teacher	Assistant Principal	3	Z, X, T
Administrative Assistant	Assistant Principal	2	R, R
Guidance Counselor	Assistant Principal	2	Q, X
Instructional Specialist	Assistant Principal	1	X
Reading Coach	Assistant Principal	1	Y
7 Other promotions			
Elementary School Teacher	Instructional Specialist	2	Z, L
High School Department Chair	Instructional Specialist	1	L

Table 16-continued

Position During Program	Position as of June 2010	No. of Promotions	Program by Random Letter
Psychologist	Central Office	1	Q
Middle School Teacher	Administrative Assistant	1	T
High School Teacher	Testing Coordinator	1	L
High School Teacher	Central Office	1	R

Thus, the numbers indicated by survey respondents were not the same across the employment questions in the survey.

Program Content as Perceived by Program Completers

Program content is the subject matter of the principal preparation program. In addition to content, program participants used related terms such as curriculum, courses, topics, and classes. It is important that principal preparation programs adhere to the content required to become licensed as an administrator in Virginia. In order to analyze perceptions of content in the 10 programs, a brief review of required program contents in Virginia lays a foundation. The Virginia Department of Education Licensure regulations approved November 2008 describes four approved routes to licensure as a school administrator. The requirements for one alternate route to licensure include: “graduate coursework in school law, evaluation of instruction, special education, finance, educational leadership, and other areas of study required by an employing Virginia school superintendent.” The graduate coursework must be completed from a regionally accredited university that has a state-approved administration and supervision program. The other alternate route to licensure is valid only in Virginia and requires “school law, evaluation of instruction, and other areas of study required by an employing Virginia school superintendent.” The required coursework is in addition to other requirements that include a 320-hour structured internship and passing the SLLA with a score of 165 or higher.

In 2008, the Virginia Department of Education revised and approved Performance Standards for School Leaders (principals and assistant principals) that “articulate the expectations of principals in the Commonwealth’s schools.” These 17 standards align with the Educational Leadership Policy Standards, which were “formally known as the ISLLC

standards.” These 17 standards are categorized into five areas: Planning and Assessment; Instructional Leadership; Safety and Organizational Management for Learning; Communication and Community Relations; and Professionalism. Clear knowledge and skills are expected of school leaders in order to earn licensure as an administrator in Virginia. These standards provide the foundation needed in order to analyze content in the principal preparation programs.

Program participants wrote 26 terms regarding perceptions of need for additional content areas and greater depth about specific content; only four positive content area terms used by respondents were stated in a positive manner. One positive perception related to specific content was made about data analysis and school culture; two positive statements about school law were made by survey respondents. Several comments by completers focused on perceived need for more rigor and less overlapping content by school practitioners.

Multiple comments described the need for more emphasis on school law, content knowledge of special education, special education law, finance, and politics. Ten percent of these comments from program participants related to school law. Other content areas requested were teacher evaluation, data analysis, ethics, and communication. One survey respondent reported receiving three hours each for the content areas of school law and special education, thus less prepared than necessary and feeling “weaker than I should” in these content areas. Program participants provided 36 total comments related to program content in contrast with four program directors that used no terms related to specific content. Only one program director who indicated content area descriptions had gone into great depth.

Program completers’ comments about perceptions of need for specific content areas are summarized in Table 17, Recommendations for Program Improvement.

Table 17

Recommendations for Program Improvement (Content)

-
1. More focus on school law (stated by 5 responders).
 2. More focus on Special Education (stated by 4 responders).
 3. More--much more--on Special Education law.
 4. With mine, I needed more of the legal aspect. We had school law and Special Education in one day, only 3 hours for each. I feel weaker in these than I should.
 5. More focus on finance and budget (stated by 3 responders).
 6. More emphasis on politics, division organization structure, time management.
 7. Include an ethics class and a class on politics.
 8. More focus on data analysis, communication, and teacher evaluations.
 9. More teacher observations.
 10. Address roles and approaches of Assistant Principals, in general, and how to help inspire change or present new approaches without "stepping on toes" of other administrators.
 11. More job preparation and the realities of the job search for Assistant Principal/Principal.
 12. Fewer classes/courses and more time spent in schools.
 13. Some groups received school finance classes, some didn't. I think ALL should, and I could have used it.
-

Program Processes as Perceived by Program Completers

Processes used to deliver principal preparation programs described how the program was delivered versus subject matter content. Program processes included delivery methods and program elements. Data analysis of program completers' open-ended comments found that the majority of all comments made by them related to program processes.

Program delivery. Program completers perceived value from “hands-on” instruction; this refers to doing a relevant assignment rather than only reading, talking, and writing about it. Other delivery methods mentioned were case studies, “war stories,” collaborative projects that were applicable to work, collegial discussions, assigned reflective activities (e.g., journal entries), and group problem solving. Relevance and use on the job were aspects of program delivery mentioned most by program completers. Program delivery with instruction related to one ISLLC standard at a time (e.g., vision of learning) received positive comments from some program participants who viewed one standard at a time as having greater depth, focus, and grasp of knowledge.

Program completers communicated positive perceptions of practitioner and university instructors. Survey comments showed that completers value instructors with experiences in school administration. Program completers held equally positive views about school practitioners and university faculty. Table 18 summarizes positive program delivery perceptions of program completers.

Perceptions of Elements by Program Completers

Program completers were asked if the eight program elements noted in the analysis of the principal preparation proposals were present in their programs. The eight elements were: mentor focus, interview during application, pretests, posttests, individual program plans, portfolio

Table 18

Positive Program Processes

<p>Program Process (Delivery and Elements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having professors that were school administrators. -Informative and useful. -Covered one domain at a time which helped very much. -Being taught by some of our county administrators. -I appreciated projects that transferred to our jobs. -I appreciate time and effort spent on the SLLA. -Discussing issues with so many wonderful educators. -I earned by license without having to earn a second M.Ed. -Unique opportunity to hear different perspectives. -Program directors/leaders were extremely helpful and supportive. -Excellent preparation for the SLLA. -The materials provided were outstanding. -Location was great because it was close to work. -Good variety of information. -Leaders asked group what areas needed more focus and provided it. -An excellent program for working parents and families. -It helped me be a better leader as a teacher and future administrator.
--	---

Table 18-continued

<p>Program Process (Delivery and Element)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Our instructors were professional and enthusiastic. They made the difference in the program. -Program leaders were extremely helpful and supportive. -Program leaders made themselves available and provided immediate feedback when needed. -Having instructors from my county who addressed relevant issues. -Presentations from other administrators within the state. -Speakers with different viewpoints. -Central office level support throughout the program. -Presentations from experts who were "in the trenches."
--	--

projects, position priority, time guarantee to work, and career coaching. In the survey, respondents were asked if each element was present, somewhat present, or not present in their respective programs. A Likert scale was utilized to calculate mean scores for the presence of each program element; elements were assigned anchors of the following scale: 3 (*present*), 2 (*somewhat present*), and 1 (*not present*). Table 19, Summary of Elements Perceived by Program Completers, presents percentages of respondents' perceptions of elements present and the mean scores of the presence of each element across all the eight programs that were represented.

Discrepancies between percentages of elements planned in programs and elements perceived present by survey respondents were noted in seven of the eight elements. Forty percent of program completers reported a mentor focus and 16% indicated no mentor focus. These responses indicated 60% of survey respondents did not experience mentor focus, in contrast with 100% planned mentor focus in all programs. Approximately one-half of program completers experienced an interview during the application process although this was planned for by 80% of the programs. Pretests were planned in 60% of the proposals as sharply contrasted with 62% of survey responders who did not experience a pretest. Program directors described the SLLA as the posttest; survey responders were divided almost evenly in two groups who did (46%) or did not (48%) experience a posttest. The portfolio/capstone project was planned in 50% of the proposals, and 82% of program completers experienced a portfolio project. Individual program plans were written in 40% of the 10 proposals; 35% of program respondents reported experiencing individual plans, and 29% of program respondents indicated the individual program plans were only "somewhat present."

Three proposals (30%) included plans for a time commitment to work within the sponsoring school division after program completion and perceived present by 35% of program

Table 19

Summary of Elements Perceived by Program Completers

Program Element	% of Proposals That Planned to Utilize Program Element	% of Program Completers That Noted These Elements PRESENT	% of Program Completers That Noted These Elements SOMEWHAT PRESENT	% of Program Completers Who Said Elements Were NOT PRESENT	Mean M Range 1-3
Mentor focus	100	39	45	16	1.37
Interview during application	80	45	19	37	1.57
Pretests	60	29	10	62	1.29
Posttests	60	46	8	48	1.50
Individual program plans	40	35	29	35	1.51
Portfolio/Capstone project	50	83	9	9	2.10
Position priority	30	9	29	62	1.08
Time guarantee to work	30	35	19	47	1.44
Career coaching	20	33	41	26	1.59

completers. Only 9% of survey respondents indicated the presence of position priority in their program although this element was included in three principal preparation proposals. Career coaching was included in two program proposals (20%); 33% of survey respondents indicated receiving career coaching and 40% indicated that career coaching was “somewhat present.”

Program completers were asked to rate each of the eight proposed program elements in terms of the degree to which each one prepared them for their career as a school administrator. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (*not helpful at all*) to 5 (*very helpful*) and the option to select “Not Applicable.” The top six elements according to mean scores were the portfolio project (3.69), mentor focus (3.22), career coaching (3.11), individual plans (2.73), posttest (2.71), and interview during the application (2.61). Position priority was rated “Not Applicable” by 74% (52) of respondents. Additional elements rated “Not Applicable” were pretest (65.3%), and time guarantee to work (58%). As detailed in Table 19, discrepancies were noted in elements written in program proposals and elements experienced by program completers.

In analyzing data on eight elements across the programs, findings showed contradicting perceptions of program completers and program directors. Program directors indicated success of program elements such as mentor focus, interviews, and position priority; program completers reported significantly lower perceptions of program elements they experienced. These perception gaps were particularly noted in the elements of mentor focus, interview during application, pretests, and position priority.

When asked what additional elements were noted by survey respondents in their program, open-ended responses included the following elements: SLLA preparation, journal review, peer review, readings, individual and group assignments, release time for internship hours, individualized strengths and aptitude assessments, team building focus, data analysis (data

driven instruction), reflective practices, emphasis on expectations as an assistant principal, and seminar discussions from practitioners. The importance and value of SLLA preparation was mentioned by five program completers as well as by two program directors.

Perceptions of program completers' most valuable aspects were tapped via open-ended format. These responses were read and coded for terms and themes by this researcher. Data analysis indicated the following findings: 67% of the comments related to program elements and 44% of the comments related to program delivery. Table 20 presents program completers' responses regarding the most valuable aspects of their respective programs. Table 21 summarizes recommendations from program participants related to valuing elements in future programs. The verbatim comments from program completers proposed suggestions for future program planners.

Outcomes as Perceived by Program Completers

Program completers provided open-ended comments regarding overall perceptions of their principal preparation programs. Most of the comments were positive, complimentary and appreciative of the time and efforts in team planning and implementation by university faculty in partnership with school division personnel. Several quotes are examples of the overall general feedback concerning the most valuable aspects of the programs:

“All of the classes taken have proven to be valuable. I have used something learned from each, I assure you.”

“The real world focus helped us learn skills we will need as administrators. The collaboration with mentor principals was a wonderful part of the process and really helped me grow as a professional.”

“The mentor/mentee relationship was critical and working within the same building as my mentor was monumental.”

Table 20

Program Completers' Element Recommendations (Processes)

Category	Comments
Processes (Delivery and Elements) Compliments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SLLA preparation sessions (7) -Internship; 12 days release time (3) -Internship at all levels, Central Office, Special Education -Summer school internship -Hands-on projects -Self-assessments -Real life scenarios, case studies, war stories -Relevance and application -Mentor-mentee relationship -Field experiences -Collegial discussions -Geared toward SLLA -Problem solving -Modules taught by superintendents and principals -Speakers with real life experiences (State Police) -Coaching for future positions -Journal responses and reflections

Table 20-continued

Category	Comments
Processes (Delivery and Elements)	-Portfolio process
Compliments	-Performance opportunities
	-Projects benefit our jobs
Complaints	-Certain classes were more informative than others.
	-The whole program was geared for the required test.
	-It did not help me much in my search for a position.

Table 21

Desired Program Elements by Program Completers (Process)

-
1. Mock interviews.
 2. Additional interview practice.
 3. More in-depth preparation for interviews.
 4. Performance observations.
 5. Make sure candidates have guaranteed time to work and priority for hire.
 6. Provide internship time and opportunities.
 7. Leadership placement during post program period.
 8. Site-based work.
 9. More actual hands-on experiences.
 10. Far more mentoring and preparation--grooming for future positions.
 11. I received very little feedback from my mentor, probably because there was no mentor training.
 12. Give better instructions for the portfolio.
 13. More guidance in the portfolio process.
 14. The need for a mentor once you have achieved an administrative position would be very helpful. Administration is a difficult position and the need to get feedback to help you grow is essential.
 15. A one-on-one assessment of strengths and weaknesses in overall preparation with a sitting principal or professor would be helpful. In other words, what else do I need to do/take in order to be an outstanding candidate?
 16. A follow-up program.

Table 21-continued

-
17. More hands-on opportunities to include shadowing during the school year.
 18. Much more time spent shadowing sitting administrators.
 19. Priority position placements. If a county is going to invest thousands of dollars to train people, then the emergent graduates should get priority placements in order to use their skills.
 20. More opportunities to network with current principals.
 21. Developing mentor/mentee partnerships within the same building.
 22. Have more activities (face-to-face meetings regarding internships) before the start of school (during the summer) so that time allows for the critical preparation, implementation and assessment.
-

“The courses were very good. I learned many new leadership techniques and was able to sculpt my own educational leadership philosophy.”

The final open-ended question posed to program completers asked what improvements would each suggest for future principal preparation programs. The responses were read and coded for key terms and to identify themes. The terms and themes were written in column form, and then analyzed for similarities and differences. Findings from data analysis indicate four areas in which themes could be identified: program goals, program content, program processes including delivery and elements, and program outcomes. Program outcomes included challenges, compliments/complaints, and relationships. Program participants did not respond to all questions and percentages were calculated according to the number of respondents per question.

Program completers provided perceptions of improvements they would suggest for future principal preparation programs. It is important to hear the “voices” of program participants; therefore, entire quotes are listed verbatim in Tables 22 through 24. In order to convey accuracy, themes are presented according to four topics: relationship perceptions in Table 22; suggestions in Table 23; compliments/complaints in Table 24.

Many of the perceptions of program completers aligned with program directors’ perceptions of value regarding practitioner orientation. The focus on practitioner-orientation and real-world, relevant assignments were consistent terms throughout Phases I, II, and III data analysis. The value of collegial relationships, rapport building and networking opportunities were shared by program directors and program completers. Program completers stressed the value of relationships with colleagues, their cohort, and appreciation of educators in both the

Table 22

Relationships (Outcomes)

-
- Time for collaboration
 - Leadership reflection
 - Meaningful relationships
 - Establish contacts
 - Networking opportunity
 - Team meetings
 - Cohort in same school division
 - Cohort from multiple school division
 - Conversations with superintendents, principals, assistant principals
 - Sharing ideas
 - Leaders asked group what needed more focus and granted these requests
 - Camaraderie with fellow participants
 - Created new contacts
 - Colleagues from the program continue to be my friends
 - Support between individuals seeking similar positions
-

Table 23

Program Completers' Suggestions (Outcomes)

1. Immediate feedback early in the program.
2. Performance observations by school district personnel.
3. Help in attaining a position.
4. How to step into administration from the classroom. At interviews there are always questions about what you have done to prepare to be a leader.
5. Give teachers time off to do administrative practice during the day.
6. No time was granted for my internship. This was desperately needed.
7. Needs to be funded by the state.
8. Keep fast track programs at the universities, but be VERY selective about who picked to go through them. It is a lot of information in a short amount of time and not everyone could do it and come out with a quality education.
9. Site-based work for more observations and volunteering. I learned a lot when I was able to apply what I learned and made it become real. . .I truly knew what it needed to look like.
10. Leadership placement during post program period.
11. More actual hands-on experiences (e.g., plan a staff development meeting; working with the building manager on building/custodial issues; experiences with special education law and how to serve as LEA in a meeting.
12. I think future programs should mandate that particular opportunities take place for all participants. In our group everyone was doing different things. I was given tasks like monitoring fire drills and doing a walk-through of the building to see if the custodians were doing their jobs. While I know this is a necessary part of the job, given the short length of the program I think other things are more important. For example, observation of handling various discipline issues and shadowing the principal for at least 5 days.

Table 23-continued

-
13. Overall organization of the program and flow of topics.
 14. There needs to be better communication among the instructors for each module. Assignments often overlapped or due dates changed without our knowledge.
 15. Better organizations of sessions and workshops.
 16. Clearer expectations of accountability.
 17. Varied workshop formats (most workshops were lecture).
 18. Less impractical coursework and more time spent in schools.
 19. Clear plan with definite expectations communicated. Proper classroom and pedagogical instructional practices.
 20. Less theoretical, more practical application and support.
 21. More organized, clearer instructions.
 22. Practice interviews and practice scenarios.
 23. We met during the school day and I know it was hard for the mentor principals to be out of their buildings. Perhaps incorporating some weekends could help.
-

Table 24

Program Completers' Compliments and Complaints

<u>Compliments</u>
1. Great program.
2. Well run and prepared me for passing the SLLA.
3. Real world examples were the most beneficial.
4. I learned a lot when I was able to apply what I learned and make it become real.
5. Great program; I just am not at a point in my life to take on an administrative role.

<u>Complaints</u>
1. I was disappointed not to receive an opportunity to move into administration. None of the six participants from my school division were offered positions, although being selected to participate in the training. No time was granted to internship, either. The internship leave was desperately needed.
2. I feel the instructors did little to get to know us and still to this day when I see some of them they do not recall ever having met me because they only showed up to teach and did not interact with us at all. I was very disappointed to not have the opportunity to become a "face and name" to future employers.
3. I was glad that I completed the program but I have been very disappointed in not being able to find a position. I have been unable to even get an interview at an entry level position. It was for that reason that I left public education. Three years of trying was enough for me.
4. My group was the pilot group for the program. I truly felt like a guinea pig in an experiment. I don't think the program was thoroughly planned and put together.

Table 24-continued

<u>Complaints</u>	
5.	I received very little feedback from my mentor, probably because there was no training.
6.	I finished the program feeling like I hadn't learned what was necessary to be an effective school principal. While I did not get much out of the program, I do know others who went through the program a couple of years later, and I believe many improvements were made to better prepare those individuals.
7.	They seemed very disorganized and could have given better instruction on the portfolio. Although I was in the first program, I know from others it wasn't any better the second time.
8.	The portfolio was more of a hoop to jump through than helpful preparation for us.
9.	Some of the classes taught by administrators from the local school system lacked focus and rigor. The professors from university X were excellent, and their classes were excellent in terms of organization, content, and rigor.

university and school division. Qualitative data were provided by program completers in open-ended format. Forty-two percent (42%) of the comments were relationship oriented; 38% of the comments were suggestions; 48% of the comments were compliments/complaints.

Program completers provided open-ended perceptions that included suggestions for future principal preparation programs. Many of the comments were three to five sentences accompanied by a few long paragraphs. The suggestions in Table 23 relate to the four program areas in Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. The four areas from which themes were identified are goals, content, processes, and outcomes.

The above comments align with perceptions of program directors regarding the selection process, advance planning and organization, clear and communicated expectations, comprehensive content, and increased rigor and relevance. Program participants provided suggestions for future programs that included career oriented components such as practice interviews as well as assistance gaining an administrative position, trained and committed mentors, and more time spent experiencing administrative tasks in schools. Table 23 provides a summary of suggestions for future principal preparation programs provided by program completers in response to the last survey question.

Summary of Perceived Outcomes

The data analysis conducted on the proposals, program directors' interview transcriptions, and the survey responses revealed common key terms that allowed for identification of themes (e.g., practitioner-oriented, rigor). Table 25 summarizes triangulation of findings for Phases I, II, and III. The graphic design in Figure 2 symbolizes a conceptual process of the programs. The proposals presented the goals and plans for what and how goals would be

Table 25

Triangulation of Data: Proposals, Interviews and Surveys

Grant Proposals	Program Directors	Program Completers
<u>Major Goals</u>		
1. Stimulate new thinking for preparation.	1. Grow our own principals to meet unique school/culture needs; tailored to each school division.	1. Gain licensure as an administrator in Virginia.
2. Increase number of fully qualified applicants for future vacancies.	2. Increase number of fully qualified applicants for future vacancies.	2. Learn to be a better leader.
3. Raise skill and knowledge levels of emerging principals.	3. Raise skill and knowledge levels of emerging principals.	3. Utilize free preparation.
4. Develop best practices model of alternate licensure based on ILSCC Standards.	4. Practitioner-oriented models.	4. Hands-on training program.
5. Need leadership succession plans.	5. Mentorship by current leaders.	5. Networking, career, and collegial relationships.
6. Performance-oriented, practitioner model of principal preparation.	6. Shared instruction by school division university faculty.	6. Fast route to licensure.
7. Need new preparation for meeting the needs of 21st century schools.	7. Faster and more effective licensure routes.	7. Geographic convenience.

Table 25-continued

Grant Proposals	Program Directors	Program Completers
8. Traditional preparation has not prepared new leaders equipped to lead challenging urban schools.	8. Place emerging principals in administrative positions. 9. Prepare for SLLA.	8. Apply and receive an administrative position.
<u>Outcomes</u>		
1. Three programs continued after the grant funding concluded.	1. Three university faculty program directors still lead alternate programs.	1. Most are still employed by the same school division.
2. Programs were initiated by university faculty who had been school administrators.	2. Two programs offer faster licensure route.	2. Relevant preparation.
3. Grant proposals are practitioner-oriented.	3. Internships are longer, more structured, more practice opportunities.	3. Over 40% of respondents have administrative positions.
4. Programs offer Fast Track licensure option or traditional master's degree.	4. Applicant pools were flooded at first; severely declined at present.	4. Twenty-one percent of respondents did not apply for administrative position.
5. Seven programs stopped due to conclusion of funding.	5. Not as many vacancies are predicted.	5. Majority of new administrators were high school teachers promoted to assistant principals.
6. Seeds planted for paid 1-year internship and longer internships.	6. Most program completers received administrative positions vs. falling short in job placements.	6. Majority endorsement areas were Elementary K-8, English, and History.

Table 25-continued

Grant Proposals	Program Directors	Program Completers
7. Two school divisions continued the partnership programs without grant funding for an additional cycle and plan to start again in fall 2010.	7. Cannot justify asking school division personnel to do more and more with budget issues, frozen or lower salaries.	7. Disproportionate female (80%), Caucasian (90%).
	8. Too time consuming.	8. Some left education or retired.
	9. Innovative models were "canned."	9. Less than half of respondents met initial goals.
	10. "Trade some things for other things."	
	11. Expensive to take best teachers out of the classroom.	
	12. Found balance between practice and theory.	
	13. All programs our program goals.	
	14. Sense of frustration for school division leaders regarding budget and personnel.	

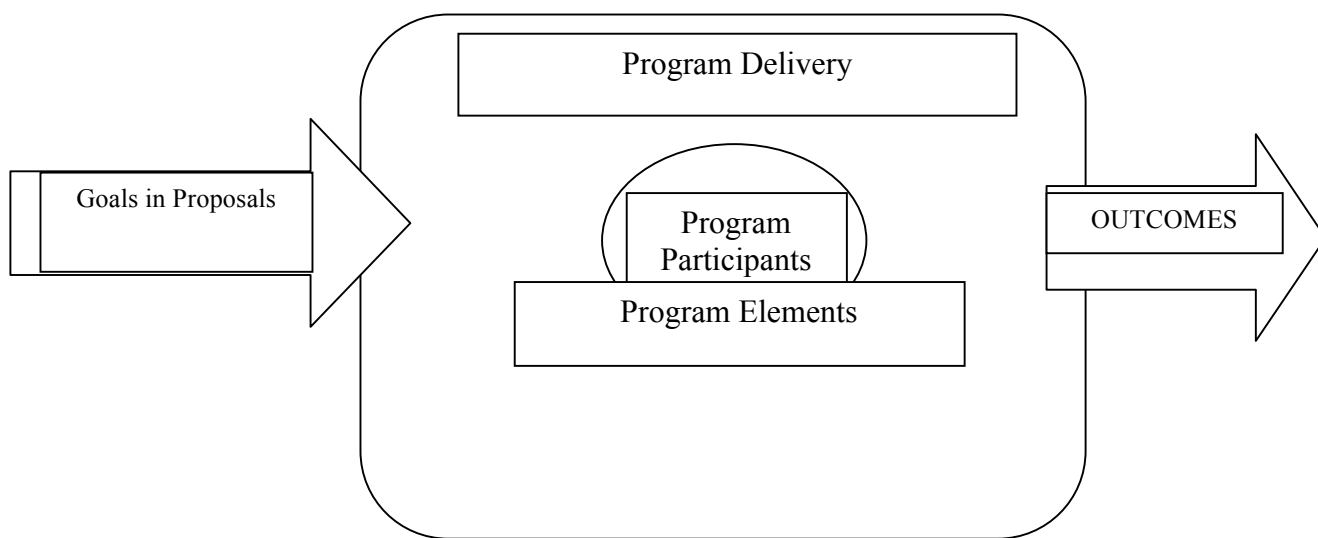


Figure 2. Conceptual design of phases I, II, and III.

met. The participants experienced the programs through content and processes (i.e., delivery and elements); results are the outcomes.

The seeds of reform initiated by these school district-based partnership programs grew into two practitioner oriented university program options. A Fast Track alternative program leads to licensure and a Master's degree program. The grant-funded preparation programs were followed by changes in internship requirements for licensure as an administrator in Virginia. Longer internships, multiple required types of experience including central office and special education are written into licensure regulations adopted in 2007 (Virginia Department of Education). Director D indicated his/her school division adopted year-long paid internships in elementary schools as a result of the grant-funded programs.

Clearly there were some gaps in perceptions of program directors and program completers. Data analysis indicated positive outcomes regarding perception of program goals in the areas of license attainment, faster programs to earn administrative endorsement, preparation for the SLLA, increasing the number of future applicants, and practitioner-oriented program delivery. Discrepancies in perceived outcomes were particularly noted in mentorship, job placement and job attainment. Findings from data analysis of interview transcripts and surveys indicate mixed perceptions of gaps in content knowledge and skills needed to be fully qualified emerging principals. Program completers indicated the need for additional knowledge and skills in order to be fully prepared as an emerging school principal. Program directors and program completers provided suggestions for future principal preparation programs that are summarized in Table 26, Suggestions for Future Programs. The suggestion topics address planning and organization, admission requirements, reduced self-selection, the need to define expectations and rigor, career planning, priority hiring, clear rubrics, trained mentors, and comprehensive content

Table 26

Suggestions for Future Programs

Program Directors	Program Completers
1. Change self-selection process; define selection process.	1. Be very selective during admission process.
2. Define expectations and rigor.	2. Clear picture of expectations needed.
3. Clear rubrics for portfolios and action projects.	3. Early and regular feedback to participants.
4. Thorough advance planning by implementation team.	4. Provide release time for internships.
5. Individual preparation programs did not work.	5. Career planning: mock interviews, resume, counsel, job search, placement, continued support.
6. Need equity in mentor roles; train mentors in advance.	6. Define priority hiring and follow through.
7. Offer paid year-long residency-based internship.	7. Follow-up components added to programs.
8. Advance technology and communication plan tested.	8. Utilize proper pedagogy for adult learners.
9. Need philosophical agreement in higher education regarding theory-practice balance and reforms needed.	9. Vary workshop formats (most were lecture).
10. Curriculum shift to practitioners focus.	10. Much more time is needed in the schools.
11. Professional development continuum for all administrators.	11. Consistent experiences for all participants.
12. Practitioners share instruction delivery.	12. Train mentors and clearly define roles.
13. Predefine time guarantee to work.	13. Need much more: School Law, Special Education, Finance, Ethics, Politics, and Communication.

Table 26-continued

Program Directors	Program Completers
14. Predefine priority position.	<p>14. Higher level of rigor from practitioners in the field.</p> <p>15. More instruction and practice with teacher observations, evaluations, personnel, pupil discipline.</p> <p>16. Instructors need to build collegial rapport with participants.</p> <p>17. Recommended shadowing of principals/ assistant principals.</p> <p>18. Meaningful, defined portfolio with clear purpose and guidelines.</p>

instruction in the areas of school law, special education, and finance. Reforms in principal preparation call for educators to continue working together for common goals.

Analysis of Qualitative Findings and Results of Statistical Analyses of Qualitative Data for Research Questions

This section contains the research questions that guided this study. Each question is followed by a description of the analysis used across the three phases and then a summary of the findings for each question is presented.

Question 1

What did the implementers of the state-funded, district-based principal preparation programs plan to accomplish?

Phase I involved collecting and analyzing the proposals that were funded for district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia's school divisions. These programs were designed to fully prepare principals via nontraditional partnerships of 3-12 school divisions, and 1-2 universities or an "entity" other than a university. Critical needs to fill projections for vacancies in principal positions were listed in 8 of the 10 proposals for state funding of the principal preparation programs. Anticipated retirements and turnover in principal positions included numerical projections, such as replacing up to 133 vacancies by 2009. The projected principal vacancies were 40%-79% by 2009 and 75%-90% by 2014.

One proposal reported an immediate need for 98 principals across four school divisions during 2004 (when the proposal for funding was submitted). Program Director D reported that in addition to 50 anticipated principal retirements, 19 new schools were planned to be opened by 2012 in order to meet their needs as the fastest growing municipality and school division in the nation. Program Director G described the 2004-2006 grant years as a "bubble" when there were

lots of vacancies on the horizon with few people in the candidate pool who were fully prepared to meet the demands of 21st century schools.

Other goals in the proposals addressed the need for fully qualified emerging principals prepared to effectively lead 21st century schools. Four proposals indicated dissatisfaction with traditional principal preparation as evidenced by the shortage of qualified principal candidates. One proposal included the statement that, “few students graduating from traditional leadership preparation programs are well prepared to assume the mantle of leadership in today’s challenging urban school context.” Another proposal indicated that traditional principal preparation programs worked in the past but no longer met the changing needs within schools.

The dissatisfaction with traditional principal preparation was supported and voiced by multiple program directors. Six program directors reported that few fully prepared candidates would be available and there was a concomitant decrease in the number of qualified, endorsed applicants. School divisions were very concerned about future school leadership vacancies. One director said that higher education had a dependency on the “monopoly” (i.e., traditional principal preparation) that was based on course work and theory. There was a perception of “status quo which called for competition because without competition there is a danger for complacency.” There needed to be other alternatives and an answer to the question, “Did traditional programs really prepare folks for the 21st century principalship?” According to Director D, one purpose of the grant-funded programs was to stimulate reform and “drive universities to alter their programs.” According to several program directors the school divisions know what they need, fully qualified principals with practical experience.

Findings from qualitative data analysis indicate that the implementers of the school-based principal preparation programs planned to “grow their own” emerging principals in order to

increase their applicant pool of fully qualified candidates capable of filling predicted job openings in the principalship. Program proposals included evidence supporting their need; program directors described significant reductions in the quantity and quality of principal applicants since 2000. An additional aspect of the goal was the implementation of practitioner-oriented instruction based upon the ISLLC standards. One director described this goal, “The state funding opportunity provided a way to move from rhetoric and philosophy to practice-based instruction.” Proposals included and program directors described the intent to have a nontraditional program without course work, seat time, as well as the avoidance of “read and regurgitate” content delivery. Program directors said that their programs “looked different” as they experimented with alternate pathways to licensure.

Another goal of the program implementers was to enact a succession plan for projected principal vacancies by providing sustainable principal preparation programs. Ensuring continuity of leadership was important to multiple school divisions. Due to dissatisfaction with traditional principal preparation, grant proposals and program directors indicated that principal preparation needed competency based orientation in order to produce new principals who are fully prepared to lead schools in the 21st century. This required hands-on, real-life preparation to gain knowledge and skills described in the ISLLC standards.

Placing newly licensed program completers into administrative positions was the “ultimate goal” of several program directors. Two programs offered career coaching to assist program completers achieve an administrative position. Six of the 10 programs implemented one of the career-oriented elements in the contractual component. These included position priority and commitment to work for specified number of years for the sponsoring school division after program completion.

The programs utilized various application and acceptance procedures. With a focus upon experienced, capable candidates for admission, some programs required recommendations and additional admission procedures such as panel interviews. One program required 5 years of successful classroom teaching experience rather than the 3 year teaching minimum requirement of the Virginia Department of Education for licensure as an administrator. Other programs required admission into the partnering university, portfolio submission, and letters of recommendation from the division superintendent. Some programs required nomination of potential leaders while other programs operated open admission procedures that included self-selection by candidates. The program directors and completers agreed that the application and acceptance procedures need to be examined and modified.

Question 2

What were the outcomes of the state-funded, district-based principal preparation programs?

The outcomes of the district-based principal preparation programs were analyzed by probing perceptions of program directors and program completers. Consideration of goal attainment was one measure of program outcomes. One of the goals was implementation of sustained, practitioner-oriented preparation programs with nontraditional processes to fully prepare emerging principals for projected vacancies. Analysis of the proposals, interviews, and survey responses brought clarity to perceived outcomes.

Sustained practitioner-oriented principal preparation programs appear to have positive outcomes for three universities and 32 school divisions. These practice-based programs reflect a theory-practice paradigm shift in the participating universities. With program modifications, three school division/university partnerships endured beyond external funding. These three

programs are implemented by university faculty with partial financial support from participating school divisions. One university offers “grant pricing” that provides a tuition discount and a Fast Track program for licensure as well as a program of traditional coursework required to earn a master’s degree. A third university operates a traditional, theory-based master’s degree and a post-master’s option for licensure in partnership with school divisions who agreed to provide filled cohorts.

Another reflection of outcomes related to program sustainability; 6 of the 10 partnership programs closed. The reasons offered for programs closing included discontinuation of grant funding and budget shortfalls. Two program directors said that the market had been flooded with over 100 administrative candidates; they recommended skipping 1 to 2 years before offering another principal preparation program. Two different program directors said they might resume principal preparation partnership programs in September 2010 depending upon the budget. Another consideration related to whether the university with whom they had partnered was interested in continuing to work together.

One program director developed a continuum of professional development for administrators beginning with principal preparation and followed up with “good, solid professional development plans” throughout the administrative career pathway. Also included in the continuum was a submission of a long-term professional growth plan. This program director recommended use of a principal preparation partnership plan sustained over time. That particular program did not respond to the recommendations of the Program Director and eliminated this principal preparation program without explanation.

A university professor who served as program director said that the partnership programs had “planted the seed” for changes in licensure that became effective in September, 2007. The

440 clock hour multilevel internship required by several grant-funded programs was viewed as helpful by program directors and most program completers. Several directors believed that structured, lengthier internships required in the 10 funded preparation programs were a precursor to an increased clock hour internship requirement adopted for licensure in Virginia. Some of the licensure changes included an increased minimum of 320 clock hours of a “deliberately structured and supervised internship that provides exposure to multiple sites with diverse student populations” (VDOE, 2008). The 2007 licensure regulations were changed to require a division superintendent’s approval of candidates before becoming licensed as a principal via an alternate route.

In 2007 the Virginia Department of Education approved four options to earn licensure as an administrator. All four options require a master’s degree from a regionally accredited university that has a state-approved administration and supervision program, 3 years of instructional experience, and a passing score of 165 on the SLLA. Option one includes a minimum 320 hours of structured, multilevel internship. Option two requires graduate coursework in school law, evaluation of instruction, and “other areas of study as required by an employing Virginia school superintendent.” Option two also restricts validity of the coursework to the employing Virginia school division. Option three requires graduate coursework in school law, evaluation of instruction, special education, school finance, educational leadership, and additional areas of study approved by the employing school superintendent. Option four addresses a valid, out-of-state license in administration and supervision.

One program director stated s/he was “proud” that the sponsoring school division modeled the principal preparation program by adopting a structured internship that evolved into a paid position. This had been modeled by the grant-funded principal preparation program. To

provide on-the-job administrative experience this school division funds one intern per elementary school. As well, this system provided additional administrators who earned a salary between that of teacher and administrator. The intern could reapply to continue the role, move to a full administrator position, or return to the classroom. The school division was continuing to explore the addition of interns at the secondary level. Program participants shared an appreciation for as well as the need to provide release time for internships during the school year or to have paid internship opportunities available during summer school.

Program completers and program directors held opposing views related to job attainment after program. Most program directors reported that most program completers had achieved administrative positions. One program director indicated that all completers were in administrative positions. Another director said that most program completers were “on their way” to administrative positions. Survey results found that 80% of program completers applied for an administrative position but only 41% reported receiving an administrative position. Open-ended responses from program completers conveyed frustration and disappointment with the dismal possibility of being hired in an administrative position. Multiple survey respondents left the field or retired without obtaining an interview for an “entry level administrative” position. Three program directors reported an overabundance of fully qualified candidates seeking a position as a principal. In contrast, four other program directors described a decline in the number and quality of candidates after their district-based principal preparation programs concluded. This led to a meager candidate pool for principals in those school divisions.

Unexpected outcomes were discussed by program directors. One of the major unintended consequences for universities was the loss or reduction of graduate students coinciding with an influx of candidates who were part of a grant-funded principal preparation program. While some

university faculty did double duty as program directors and instructors or served multiple school divisions collaborating in different preparation programs, their faculty members experienced the impact of reduced student numbers in traditional educational leadership courses.

School division program directors shared their concern about the additional time commitment required of school division personnel going above and beyond what is humanly possible. One director indicated it was “too time-consuming” to operate this type of program again and it was a “relief” to let the university take over principal preparation. Their school division offered the university tuition support for students as well as a cohort filled by the school division each year.

Both program directors and program completers suggested that advance organization and careful planning was imperative to meet program goals. Concerns held in common were: “undefined expectations” of the program, uneven content delivery, inconsistent assignments, and lack of clarity in rubrics, as well as inadequate “rigor” in courses, seminars, and modules. Some school division personnel were challenged by introducing rigor in the courses they taught.

Additional outcomes include experiential knowledge gained from being among the first to participate in an alternate preparation program. Technological plans for 50% of the web-based instruction and interaction resulted in unexpected challenges. Several program directors recommended advance planning and trial tests of technology connectivity and access. One connection issue developed because the program participants were not registered as university students and were not approved for access to technology resources at the university. “Beaucoup” connection and communication problems developed when the school division changed network service providers in the middle of the school year. Program completers conveyed frustration with communication matters such as late notice for location changes and posted assignments.

Overall, the program directors and program completers viewed the programs as having achieved the goal of increasing the number of fully qualified candidates holding administrative endorsement. One program director summed up the major benefit and outcome by saying, “We were able to take some very exceptional people and in a relatively short period of time get them qualified to fill administrative positions that we know were going to come open.” Having met their initial goals, the majority of the program directors reported pride in the achievements of their respective programs.

Lessons learned by program directors and input from program completers provide suggestions for future principal preparation programs. These suggestions are considered as outcomes of the programs because they may plant seeds of improvement.

Question 3

How were the elements used in principal preparation programs perceived by program directors and program completers?

Question 3, a major aspect of this research, explores eight elements that were grouped into three components, including: the personal interactive component with tapping or nominating candidates, face-to-face interviews, and mentor focus; the individual centered component of pre and/or post testing, individual program plan, and portfolio/capstone project; and the contractual component that included position priority within the division when searching for a position as principal, and commitment to work within division for a specified time period after program completion. These three components, with their respective elements, are described in relation to perceptions held by program directors and completers. Program directors and program completers shared similar views of some elements that were present in their programs.

Program directors emphasized the importance of the selection process for candidates who had demonstrated success in the classroom and as a leader in their school division. One director said that higher quality applicants would result in a higher quality emerging principal. Program participants shared the perspective that selection is an important process that requires careful attention. Several proposals included plans for an alternative to self-selection by instituting a nomination or “tapping” process to recommend a future school principal. In some programs, the nominating administrator then became the program candidate’s mentor throughout the program as well as the first year on an administrative job.

Proposals for eight of the ten programs included interviews with candidates as part of the selection process; 44% of program completers indicated they had been interviewed. Interviews were conducted in a variety of ways including one-on-one conversations, small group interview, panel interview with representation from involved partners, or a central office panel interview comprised of school division personnel. One interview plan excluded involvement of personnel from the candidate’s school division to ensure impartial admission decisions across participating school divisions.

Several program directors described a unique approach regarding notification for an open application process; they notified all principals and employees in their school divisions about applying to the district-based principal preparation program. Other directors chose to send flyers to all division schools as well as electronic notification to every teacher in the division. One program director stressed the need for open enrollment opportunities to have a fair system for interested candidates as well as recommended candidates. One director stated, “Self-selection might be something we would change, although you have to be careful with that. If you’re

offering a program, you can't just say it's for my friends, you pretty much have to open it up to everybody.”

The mentorship element was included in each of the 10 proposals and discussed by 6 of the 9 program directors who were interviewed. The pairing of mentors with candidates varied; some programs had structured plans of assigned pairs, multiple mentors assigned throughout the program, as well as haphazard mentorships.

Program directors and program completers reported mixed perceptions of mentorship. These perceptions spanned the spectrum of superlative comments for outstanding mentors to nonexistent mentors. The programs that implemented advance training of committed mentors had outstanding reviews by program directors. One program director articulated concerns about inequity of mentorship due to time commitments ranging from almost no contact to considerable daily or weekly contact. Other directors addressed the challenge of finding committed mentors from the ranks of principals who were not already stretched too thin. Survey respondents indicated mentor focus was a strong component in 39% of the programs and to a smaller degree in 45% of the programs, while 16% experienced no mentorship at all. The mentor focus element had multiple suggestions for improvement in future principal preparation programs.

The individual centered component included pre and posttests, individual program plans, and portfolio/capstone project. Pretests were utilized to plan individualized programs for program participants and for self-assessments. Program directors conveyed their opinions that individualized program plans are “too time intensive” and “did not work at all.” One program director indicated preparation of 48 pretests and individual program plans took most of the planning and implementation time, thus it was “scrapped.” Program completers indicated 62% did not experience pretests. Program directors considered the SLLA as a posttest; program

completers indicated mixed perceptions of posttests with 47% indicating they did not experience this element in their principal preparation program.

Individual program plans were planned in four proposals and experienced by 35% of program completers who responded to the survey. Program directors involved with individual plans indicated they were too time consuming and did not work for their program. The attempts to individualize based on “deficiencies” resulted in unsuccessful, fragmented program delivery that was deemed unsuccessful by the program director. Program directors and participants who utilized pretests for leadership or personality traits indicated perceived value from discussions of pretest results and self-reflection journals.

The portfolio element was diversely perceived by directors and completers. Portfolio projects were included in four program proposals and a capstone project was planned in a fifth program. Fifty percent of the proposals included a portfolio or capstone project. The portfolio projects were not defined in the proposals, other than one “mini-portfolio” required for admission into one program. Survey respondents indicated 82.6% experienced a portfolio project and 8.7% did not have a portfolio project. Survey respondents rated the portfolio project as very helpful to their current position (24%) or somewhat helpful (18%) in contrast to 22% who deemed it not helpful at all or minimally helpful.

The contractual component included two elements: position priority and a time commitment to work for their sponsoring school division for a specified number of years after program completion. These elements received more questions than answers or opinions. Position priority was not defined or stated in proposals or elsewhere prior to initiation of the programs. Perceptions of position priority implied program completers receive consideration as top candidates for principal vacancies. An examination of the two terms: position, meaning a job

or title or appointment; and priority, meaning “precedence in time or order and “a right to precedence over others” (Webster, 2001, p. 1142). The two words imply an expectation of receiving an administrative position. This element had mixed perceptions from program directors who indicated program completers achieved an administrative position. Program completers felt disappointment about not having the opportunity to advance into administrative positions. Clearly, position priority needed advance planning with definitions understood by all participants.

The time commitment or guarantee to work was an agreement for the program completer to remain in the sponsoring school division for 3 or 4 years after completing the principal preparation program. In the three programs that planned inclusion of this element, only one program had a clear plan of action if a program completer left the division prior to the end of the time designation. The agreement was that the program completer would reimburse the school division \$1,000.00 if they left the division before 3 years of working in the school system after program completion.

The program director in this school division considered what the program completers received was a “great deal” for them since they received a fully funded preparation program along with funding for the \$480 SLLA administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). In this division two program completers left the division for administrative positions in nearby divisions and “gladly paid” the \$1,000; their salaries increased significantly in their new school divisions. A different program director relied on ethics of program completers to handle a touchy situation; none of the program completers in that program broke the agreement.

The input from program completers on the most valuable aspects of their principal preparation program indicated three areas: content, processes that include program delivery and

elements, and outcomes. Program completers perceived value in building collegial relationships with other educators as well as exposure to different perspectives. The opportunity to work in cohorts, teams, small groups, and meet speakers with real life experiences was an important aspect to program completers. Two program directors relayed positive team rapport and learning new things about leadership were valuable aspects. Many comments of appreciation were voiced for the administrators and university faculty, especially those who made themselves available for questions and feedback. In contrast, several survey respondents referred to feeling dismay if school division instructors made no attempt to meet or interact with program participants.

In open-ended survey responses, program completers delineated aspects of their programs that were additional elements they found to be of value beyond the eight elements in this study. The additional program element that received the most open-ended comments was the preparation and study sessions prior to taking the SLLA. One program director described the use of ETS test preparation materials and mock test practice sessions that were implemented to help students become “much more prepared and competent” on the SLLA. The test preparation sessions have continued beyond the grant program and students who participated performed better than those without the preparation, according to an educational leadership faculty member. All 10 programs were based upon the ISLLC standards and several program directors reported exceptionally high pass rates with higher overall scores achieved by grant-funded program completers.

Program directors viewed and program completers experienced the internship as a valuable experience. A 440-hour structured internship required 120 hours per level (elementary, middle and high school) in addition to 20 hours each in central office and special education. Reflective logs or journals provided a source for collegial dialogue with intern supervisors,

colleagues or mentors. The real-life, case study, and scenarios were perceived as applicable, relevant and fascinating by program completers.

Program completers gave praise regarding the following additional program processes: study sessions for the SLLA, internship with paid release days, relevant case studies, modules based on the ISLLC standards, multilevel 440 hour internships that included central office and special education, paid summer school internship, collegial discussions, group action projects, instruction provided by superintendents, and career coaching. The collegial relationships with other educators and the opportunities to network and collaborate were very meaningful to program completers. In several cases, program completers stressed the need for building relationships and indicated that they did not even meet some of the instructors where they were hoping to become a “face with a name” in their school division.

The program elements were planned to support the goals of the program participants, and each element provided varying perceptions of value. The findings represented data analysis of 10 proposals (Phase I), interviews with nine program directors (Phase II) and eight programs represented by program completers who participated in the survey (Phase III).

Summary

Chapter 4 presented data and findings derived from analysis of 10 state-funded proposals in Virginia, nine interviews with program directors, and 75 survey responses of program completers. The first part of this chapter provided a detailed description of the subjects, data sets, and data collection that included program proposals, program directors, and program completers. This was followed by description of data analysis from the three phases of data collection: proposal analysis, program directors’ interview analyses, and survey findings. Findings were presented by themes ferreted from the four areas around which the dissertation is organized:

goals, content, processes (i.e., delivery, elements), and outcomes. The sections that followed included findings organized by research question. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the purpose of this study, supplemental findings, a discussion of findings, conclusions, implications for practitioners, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of goals, content, processes, and outcomes of 10 district-based principal preparation programs. This study also was intended to probe the perceived outcomes of these 10 programs and consider their impact on educational leadership reform in Virginia. The study also can serve as a conduit of information about elements of preparation programs perceived to be helpful.

Collection of data included proposals that were submitted for funding of principal preparation programs, taped and transcribed semi structured interviews with nine of the ten program directors, and a web-based survey submitted by available program completers. Thematic and content analyses of proposals, analyses of themes from interviews with program directors, and both descriptive statistics and qualitative analyses of survey responses were involved in the analyses.

Supplemental findings are only provided in this chapter. Although outside the purview of the three major questions (i.e., goals, outcomes, elements) the supplemental findings are instructive for those who prepare emerging principals. The section on Supplemental Findings is followed with encapsulated Findings related to goals, content, processes, and elements. Conclusions, implications for practitioners, and recommendations for future research follow Findings.

Supplemental Findings

The input from program completers on the most valuable aspects of their principal preparation program fell into four areas: goals, content, processes that include program delivery and elements, as well as outcomes of the programs. Although the intent of one category of specific probes was directed to capture program directors' and completers' perceptions of eight specific elements, the open-ended questions were broad enough to obtain a more complete portrayal of perceptions of all aspects of the preparation programs. Perceptions outside the specific categories (i.e., delivery, elements, goals, content) are supplemental findings and are described below.

Program completers perceived value in building collegial relationships with other educators as well as in exposure to different perspectives. The opportunity to work in cohorts, teams, small groups, and meet speakers with real life experiences was an important aspect to program completers. Two program directors said that positive team rapport and learning new things about leadership mattered considerably. Many comments of appreciation were voiced for the administrators and university faculty, especially those who made themselves available for questions and feedback. In contrast, several survey respondents indicated that they felt dismayed when school division instructors made no attempt to meet or interact with them.

Of the supplemental findings, the program element that received the most open-ended comments was about preparation and study sessions prior to taking the SLLA. One program director described the use of test preparation materials offered by ETS and mock test practice sessions that were implemented to help students become "much more prepared and competent" on the SLLA. The test preparation sessions have continued to be offered by school divisions in spite of several principal preparation programs having closed down. According to a number of

faculty members in educational leadership, those who participated in the prep sessions performed better on the SLLA than those without the preparation.

Program directors and program completers viewed the internship as a valuable experience. A 400 hour, structured internship required 120 hours per level (elementary, middle and high school) in addition to 20 hours each in central office and special education. Program completers said they found value in writing as well as discussion about reflective logs or journals. The reflective logs provided sources of discussion between program completers and their assigned mentors. Program completers considered the real-life case studies, scenarios, and war stories to be applicable, relevant, and fascinating.

Findings

The findings related to goals, content, processes, and outcomes are listed below.

1. Findings demonstrated that the 2004-2006 district-based principal preparation programs in Virginia implemented practitioner-oriented instruction to provide nontraditional routes to licensure as an administrator.

2. Program directors were satisfied that the main goal of the programs was met in the achievement of increased numbers of fully qualified applicants for projected openings in the principalship across school divisions.

3. Program directors who were faculty members in educational leadership have continued to implement practitioner-oriented principal preparation programs with one option leading to licensure and the other option leading to a master's degree with licensure.

4. Program directors and program completers viewed the instruction, provided by university faculty members and school division personnel, as having been relevant, applicable, and targeted instruction when employed by those with experience in school leadership.

5. Program completers perceived practitioners who provided instruction as needing to have higher standards and require greater rigor. Completers requested clear expectations for assignments including the portfolio.

6. Definition of the selection process needs clarity with written information describing the steps and procedures available to potential applicants. Recommendations and nominations of candidates were preferred over self-selection (i.e., applying without professional encouragement from known leaders).

7. Preplanning and organization is necessary to implement a structured principal preparation program that provides content of required knowledge and skills based upon the ISLLC standards. Advance planning needs to include: clearly defined goals and expectations; communication among program implementers to provide instruction without overlap or gaps; and defined rubrics for portfolio projects and other assignments.

8. Program elements need to be defined prior to implementation. Definitions are needed for two elements in particular: position priority and a time commitment/guarantee to work for the sponsoring schools after program completion. To reduce potential misunderstandings personnel involved in partnerships to prepare principals should avoid implied expectations about potential vacancies by having clear definitions of these two program elements.

9. Mentors need a clearly defined and well designed preparation program for this role. A screening process for selection of mentors is necessary to determine both availability and commitment to a mentee. Reflecting the chasm between strong and weak or uninvolved mentors, program directors and program completers reported a wide spectrum of perceptions about quality in the implementation of mentorship.

10. Program completers viewed career planning, frequently offered by a mentor/coach, to be a necessary element for future principal preparation programs. Findings include perceived value of career oriented elements along with requests for mock interviews, resume guidance, career counseling, job search, placement, and continued support throughout the first year as a new administrator. Follow-up after being hired in a principal position was suggested by program completers.

11. Program completers requested considerably more content instruction in the areas of school law, special education, and finance as well as courses on ethics, politics, and communication.

12. Program completers wanted more opportunities for teacher observations and evaluations, data analysis, and pupil discipline. Feedback from program completers included requests to shadow a principal and/or assistant principal for an established period of time in addition to the internship requirements.

13. Consistent experiences (e.g., shadowing a principal or watching a custodial task) along with regular feedback for all participants were requested by program completers who perceived gaps in their program.

14. The Virginia Department of Education may consider the inclusion of shadowing a principal for a minimum period of time as part of the internship requirements.

Conclusions

A philosophical agreement is needed in higher education regarding the balance of theory and practice. Agreement is also needed about the reform process and which reforms are necessary. Operating a program with mixed priorities and paradigm opposition among faculty members weakens the strength and unity of the program. A curriculum shift to a practitioner

focus, aligned with ISLLC standards, will result in effective preparation of fully qualified emerging principals. The field does not have and needs a definition of what a highly qualified, fully prepared emerging principal knows, can apply, and “looks like.”

University programs in educational leadership would likely benefit from inclusion of experienced school practitioners as instructors, guest lecturers, or planning content and delivery in their programs. As well, school divisions may benefit from inclusion of faculty members in educational leadership assisting with staff development and/or district-based principal preparation.

Factors affecting the preparation of fully prepared, highly qualified principals, the diminishing pool of capable candidates for the principalship, projected shortages due to retirements, and projected pupil increases made principal preparation programs an important area of study. Program directors and program completers in this study perceived practitioner-oriented preparation based on ISLLC standards as providing relevant knowledge and skills for emerging principals.

Implications for Practitioners

The findings in this study are positive for school divisions that need to place fully qualified principals and support them as they lead schools toward the goals of pupil achievement in a safe environment. Educational leadership programs in universities may benefit from findings related to the theory-practice paradigm balance in response to the calls for reform of principal preparation. The findings may also provide helpful information for Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Board of Education personnel who review requirements for licensure as an administrator in Virginia.

The findings of this study are encouraging for school division personnel who have interest in professional development, human resources, and participating in principal preparation planning and/or implementation. The relevance and applicability for principal preparation provided by practitioners may increase opportunities for formalized partnerships, such as positions that are mutually supported by universities and school divisions or shared positions with half-time in school administration and half-time preparing principals. The literature shows that only 6% of educational leadership faculty has experience as a school administrator (Levine, 2005). It behooves universities to hire practitioners to aide in preparing future principals.

A commitment by teachers and principals to rigor, relevance and relationships is a priceless cornerstone for educating pupils. Positive, caring relationships among colleagues and students are crucial for learning and thriving. The old adage that “no ones cares what you know until they know that you care” is also applicable in principal preparation programs. Over half of the program directors who participated in interviews expressed enthusiasm and commitment toward preparation of emerging principals. This passion and zeal for “guiding others to lead others” seemed to be a driving force behind adaptation and continuation of three principal preparation programs. Moral leadership and service to others are expected of educators who lead; and critical cornerstones for principals. These cornerstones are enhanced by the areas in this study: goals, content, processes, and outcomes. Program completers were adult learners who had fully funded opportunities to achieve the goal of full qualifications to become a principal. Content and instruction was valued when it was relevant to future principals. Moral leadership and service to others were provided by program implementers.

As a result of increasing demands placed on principals, contributing to the nation-wide shortage of fully qualified principals, these findings validate the need to fully prepare emerging

principals to the highest standards. A greater emphasis on career preparation along with a continuum of professional development that includes consistent mentoring may bring forth influential principals capable of maximizing pupil achievement.

Recommendations for Future Research

From the findings of this study, I have some recommendations for future research. This study could be replicated with other principal preparation programs including university sponsored programs or school district-based programs. There may be more suitable questions posed to program directors, program instructors, and program completers. More specific questions regarding changes in position and terms defined to survey respondents may provide clearly understood responses. Survey respondents appeared to have differing interpretations for the terms administrator, principal, and assistant principal. As became clear from the responses, it would be better to specify the terms principal or assistant principal rather than administrator.

This study could lead to a study on the effectiveness of the program completers by examining pupil achievement data in the schools they lead as principal. The perceptions of teachers who work with new principals may yield beneficial findings related to principal preparation. Assessments of personality traits may be administered to principal preparation program completers to ascertain traits and skills associated with effective principals. Pupils' perceptions of school principals may have associations with principal preparation, pupil achievement, attendance rates, graduation rates, and discipline data. A comparative study of different principal preparation programs could be conducted by analyzing syllabi from different universities in Virginia.

Analysis of artifacts related to principal preparation programs may provide data regarding goals, program content, program delivery, and outcomes. A study of syllabi and content of

educational leadership courses as compared to another discipline (i.e., policy, business) may help define rigor for practitioners who mentor or instruct future principals. A study to understand why school division personnel were “so easy” on program completers who reported a low level of rigor may be beneficial. It may be of value to study the discrepancies between planned program elements and actual elements utilized (e.g., 100% planned mentors and 40% experienced mentorship); as well, what could the Virginia Department of Education have done when finding mentorship was not included as planned?

A longitudinal study of emerging principals throughout their career may provide a detailed, insider view of preparation and experiences. A study of the challenges and benefits of the principalship may yield helpful information regarding preparation and retention of school principals. The principal is the most influential person in a school building and thus requires the highest quality preparation possible.

From a school division web site:

“Many things can wait; the child cannot. Now is the time his bones are being formed, his mind is being developed. To him, we cannot say tomorrow; his name is today.”

-Gabriela Mistral

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Appendix A

School-based Principal Preparation Programs

Program No.	Grant Submitted Date	Length of Program	Dates of Program	Program Content	No. of School Divisions	University or College Partnership	No. of Participants	Date of SLLA
1	04-05	1.5	1/05-5/06	4 modules; individual plan	8	1	35	5/06
1	05-06	1.0	9/05-5/06	4 modules; individual plan	3	1	32	5/06
2	04-05	1.5	1/05-7/06	7 courses	2	1	12	7/06
3	04-05	1.0	10/5-10/6	Seminars, coaching, shadowing, internship	1	0	25	8/06
4	04-05	2.0	8/04-6/06	10 courses	12	2	36	6/06
5	04-05	2.0	1/04-12/05	Courses for M.Ed. plus mentor focus	3	1	25	1/06
6	05-06	1.5	8/05-1/07	Individual program plans of ISLLC units of study; mentors	11	1	50	6/06, 8/06, 1/07, 6/07
7	04-05	2.0	10/05-5/07	Individual modular program aligned with ISLLC; capstone project	3	1	28	5/07, 7/07
8	05-06	2.0	9/05-5/07	4 strands aligned with ISLLC; 440-hour internship	5	1	25	6/07
9	04-05	1.0	1/05-1/06	5 courses; portfolio; leadership institute, mentor	4	2	35	1/06, 6/06
10	05-06	2.0	10/05-5/07	Courses for M.Ed.	1	1	15	5/07, 7/07

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Program Directors

1. Please describe your principal preparation program.
2. What aspects of your *principal preparation programs* were different from university-based *principal preparation programs*?
3. What worked well? *What were its benefits?*
4. What *did you change about your program and how were changes effected? If beginning again, what* would you change *about the implementation of your program?* How?
5. Is the program still operating?

If yes, *is it the same/different?* Please *describe*.

If not, *what do you think contributed to it not being continued?*

6. What were the *major* challenges and benefits of your program?
7. *Given the goals when submitting the proposal for funding, please describe how you view having: met, exceeded, modified, discarded, or failed to meet those initial goals.*
8. Do you have documents/program artifacts to share with me? I will return everything provided.
9. Request program participants' email *and explain that it will be used* for an internet survey of the perceptions of *program completers from the PPP*. Possible scripted question, "As you know from my advance letter, I am interested in conducting a survey of program completers for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 cohorts. Have you been able to generate a list of names with current work email addresses? If not, how can I help facilitate the process? I need to have the email addresses by _____ (date)."

Appendix C

Web-survey Questions for Program Completers

Demographic data:

1. Gender
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
2. Age range during the principal preparation program
 - ☐ 20-25
 - ☐ 26-30
 - ☐ 31-35
 - ☐ 36-40
 - ☐ 41-45
 - ☐ 46-50
 - ☐ 51-55
 - ☐ 56-60
 - ☐ 61-65
 - ☐ 66-70
3. Race
 - ☐ African American
 - ☐ Hispanic
 - ☐ Asian
 - ☐ Pacific Islander
 - ☐ Caucasian
 - ☐ Other _____ (please enter)
 - ☐
4. Which school-based principal preparation program did you complete?
 - ☐ Program 1 – The Principalship Education Plan (PEP), XXX County
 - ☐ Program 2 – The Leadership Preparation Academy
 - ☐ Program 3 – The Leadership Academy for Aspiring School Leaders
 - ☐ Program 4 – Aligning Leadership Investment and Growth Now
 - ☐ Program 5 – Leaders Mentoring Leaders
 - ☐ Program 6 – Professional Partnership for School Leadership Preparation

- Program 7 – The Urban School Leaders Preparation Program
 - Program 8 – The Central Virginia Regional Consortium
 - Program 9 – The XXXXX Valley Leadership Development Consortium
 - Program 10 – The XXXXX Leadership Fellows
5. If you attended multiple preparation programs, please indicate the school, university, or school division where you attended.
- _____
6. What was your position when you began the principal preparation program?
- Teacher in elementary school
 - Teacher in middle school
 - Teacher in high school
 - Instructional leader (Please define) _____
 - Administrative Assistant or Dean
 - Assistant Principal
 - Principal
 - Central office position (please list) _____
 - Other (please list) _____
7. What is your current position?
- Teacher in elementary
 - Teacher in middle school
 - Teacher in high school
 - Instructional leader (please define) _____
 - Administrative Assistant or Dean
 - Assistant Principal
 - Principal
 - Central office position (please list) _____
 - Other (please list) _____
8. What are your teaching endorsement area(s):
- English
 - Math
 - Social Studies/History
 - Science
 - Health/PE
 - Visual Arts (Art, Photography, Graphic Design)
 - Performing Arts (Theatre, Band, Chorus, Orchestra)
 - Technology Education/Computer Science
 - Exceptional Education

- Family and Consumer Science
- Other (please list)_____

9. Are you still employed in the same school division that sponsored your **school based principal preparation program**?

- Yes
- No

10. Did you receive a Principal position in your sponsoring school division?

- Yes
- No

11. Did you receive a Principal position in a different school division in Virginia?

- Yes
- No

12. Did you receive an administrative position after completing your principal preparation program?

- Yes
- No

13. Did you apply for an administrative position?

- Yes
- No

14. Were the following elements present in your principal preparation programs?

Yes Somewhat No

Interview during the application
Mentor Focus
Portfolio project
Career coaching
Position priority
Time guarantee to work
Individual program plans
Pretest
Posttest

15. Were additional program elements noted in your program?

Open-ended responses: _____

16. Of the program elements present in your principal preparation program, to what degree has each element prepared you for your current position?

Scale: Not Applicable, Did not help at all, Helped somewhat, Very Helpful

Interview during the application

Mentor Focus

Portfolio project

Career coaching

Position priority

Time guarantee to work

Individual program plans

Pretest

Posttest

17. What did you think were the most valuable aspects of your principal preparation programs?

Open-ended responses: _____

18. What improvements would you suggest for future principal preparation programs?

Open-ended responses

Appendix D
Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____ (Vicki Thompson), agree to keep full confidentiality on all information provided for transcription of any source provided to Kathryn Kirk for her dissertation through Virginia Commonwealth University.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

RESEARCH SUBJECT CONSENT INFORMATION FORM

TITLE: *Perceptions of School-based Principal Preparation Programs in Virginia 2004-2006*

VCU IRB NO.: #HM12953

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to probe perceptions of school-based principal preparation programs in Virginia 2004-2006 by program directors and program completers.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been a director or completer of a school-based principal preparation program in Virginia 2004-2006.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to your responses.

In this study, you will be asked questions related to your experiences and perceptions of your principal preparation program. Program directors will be interviewed by telephone to respond to ten questions related to perceptions of principal preparation programs. Program completers will be asked to respond anonymously to a web-based survey regarding perceptions of the principal preparation program. The web-based survey may take up to ten minutes for completion. The study will be completed by August 2010. Questions may include planned objectives, program elements experienced, and perceptions of the respective programs.

Significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Sometimes talking about these subjects causes people to become uncomfortable. Several questions will ask about things that have happened in your experience that may have been unpleasant. You do not have to talk about any subjects you do not want to talk about, and you may end the interview or survey any time.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS

You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but, the information we learn from people in this study may help us design better programs for emerging principals.

COSTS

There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview or filling out the web-based survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of interview notes and digital audio recordings of interviews, or responses to a web-based survey. Data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by an assigned ID number, not names, and stored separately in a locked research area. All personal identifying information will be kept in password protected files and these files will be deleted within six months of the dissertation defense. Other records such as program artifacts will be kept in a locked file cabinet for six months after the study ends and will be destroyed at that time. Only the final dissertation will be kept indefinitely. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data and safety monitoring plan is established.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

The interviews with program directors will be audio taped, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the session, all members will be asked to use initials only so that no names are recorded. The tapes and the notes will be stored in a locked cabinet. After the information from the tapes is typed up, the tapes will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

- *You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.*

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

*Dr. Charol Shakeshaft
Department Chair, Educational Leadership
Oliver Hall, Virginia Commonwealth University
804-828-9892*

*Dr. Rosemary Lambie
Professor Emeritus, Educational Leadership
Virginia Commonwealth University
804-320-1406*

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, VA 23298
Telephone: 804-827-2157

You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at <http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm>.

Appendix F

Initial Letter to Program Directors

Date: _____

Dear Program Directors Individually Named
Address

Dear _____,

As a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University, I am conducting a research study regarding school-based principal preparation programs in partnership with universities in Virginia. The data collected from this case study will add to the body of knowledge regarding methods of preparing new principals. According to the literature, there are current and anticipated shortages of fully qualified applicants for the principalship. This study may add insight regarding elements, content, and methodology for preparing new school leaders. School divisions, educational leadership faculty, and educational leaders at the Virginia Department of Education may benefit from this study.

I would like to schedule an interview with you to discuss your thoughts and perceptions about the grant-funded program of which you were the program director in 2004-2005 or 2005-2006. Further, I am requesting any documents or artifacts about your principal preparation program that you may be able to share. I plan to investigate aspects of all ten grant-funded programs in Virginia during the years mentioned. As a follow-up, I would like to anonymously survey your program completers during the same aforementioned years. This web-based survey may yield helpful perceptions about the principal preparation programs. There will be no identifying data revealing any names.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I will call you in a week to ten days to schedule a phone interview or personal interview.

Yours in education,

Kathryn G. Kirk, Doctoral Student
Virginia Commonwealth University

Kathryn G. Kirk
VCU-SOE Doctoral Studies
P. O. Box 642020
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2020
Kathryn_kirk@ccpsnet.net
804-378-7120 or 804-794-3213

VITA

Kathryn Gordy Kirk is a native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and graduated from the University of Richmond in 1977 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education. In 1979, she earned a Master of Education degree in Special Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. Kathryn taught children in Chesterfield County Public Schools, United Methodist Family Services, Westminster Academy, Collegiate Schools, and Virginia Department of Correctional Education. After she completed the VCU Post-master's Certificate program in Educational Leadership in 2003, she has held positions as Special Education Department Chair, Dean of Students, and Assistant Principal for high school and two middle schools. She is currently an Assistant Principal at Tomahawk Creek Middle School in Chesterfield County.

Kathryn was blessed with three sons: Campbell McLane Kirk, Tyler Fleet Kirk, and Hunter Watson Kirk. Tyler and Karen Kirk, their previous son, Graham Hunter Kirk (March 2009) and new baby boy enriched their family. Kathryn is proud of her three sons who serve in the United States Marine Corps and pursue educational goals. All three sons have experienced combat deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with humanitarian missions in Haiti. Martial arts studies were a focus for many years as Tyler earned his 2nd Dan (degree) Black Belt in Taekwondo at age 10, and then instructed classes that included his brothers and mother. Campbell earned his 1st Degree Black Belt as a young teen. Hunter and Kathryn tested together to earn their 1st Degree Black Belts in Taekwondo and began studying Pa Kua Chang Kung Fu.

Kathryn's sister, Laura Gordy Davison, is her best friend and supporter. Her mother, Marilyn Bowlin Gordy, actively participated in this dissertation by her support and questioning, "Is it done YET?"

In addition to her love of water and all activities related to water, Kathryn loves to read, listen to jazz, play piano, paint with oils, ride bicycles, speed walk, and practice yoga and tai chi. Her faith in God was nurtured at St. Luke's Methodist Church in Denton, Maryland as well as St. Giles Presbyterian Church and West End Assembly of God in Richmond. The love and memories of two Chesapeake Retriever family members, Gretl and DreamChaser, inspire the dream of adopting and raising another special Chessie puppy.